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**THE EBRO IN *ARAGONESISMO*
AND ARAGONESE NATIONALISM**

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PhD

NOVEMBER 2010

NORTHUMBRIA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
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PhD DISSERTATION

**THE EBRO IN *ARAGONESISMO*
AND ARAGONESE NATIONALISM**

BRENDA REED

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Northumbria University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

Since the 1970s Aragon has been at the centre of heated controversies over central government proposals to transfer water from the Ebro to Spain's Mediterranean coastal regions and the scene of numerous mass demonstrations in opposition to these. Throughout the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries the Ebro has been used and perceived by Aragonese regionalism, nationalism and *aragonesismo* in a variety of ways. This gives rise to the possibility that opposition to the transfer of water from the Ebro goes beyond purely economic and environmental considerations and evokes deeper nationalistic aspects which see it as an essential element of Aragonese identity, patrimonial wealth and natural national heritage.

The Ebro had a prominent place in the thinking of the early twentieth century nationalist group as a life-giver and father figure of Aragonese identity and a symbol of territory, homeland, regional development and patrimonial wealth. Later defence of the Ebro against proposed water transfers has been used by Aragonese territorial parties to raise key *aragonesista* and nationalist issues, increase national awareness and assist in nation-building. The thesis shows how it has become inextricably interwoven with aspects such as identity, myths, symbols, heritage, collective memory and future economic prosperity and how threats to it, in the form of proposed water transfers, are used to stir up feelings of a 'nationalistic' nature, create a sense of grievance and injustice and make it a powerful 'rallying symbol', 'crowd symbol' and a 'symbol of unity'. However, the analysis reveals many different derivations, contradictions, differences and paradoxes in how it is viewed in different periods and by different *aragonesista* and nationalist groups which detract from it reaching its full symbolic potential.

To date, there have been no specific studies of the importance of the Ebro in *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism. This thesis will contribute to knowledge on this aspect as well as to debates on sub-state nationalisms and the role of landscape and natural elements in nationalism and national identity.

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* Part of this chapter was included in an article published in *El Ebro* (Brenda Reed, ‘Algo más que un río? El simbolismo del Ebro’, *El Ebro*, No. 6, (2006), pp. 139-159).

PREFACE

My interest in the topic of drought and water policy in Spain arose out of my studies of the Spanish language, the milestones of which coincided with major events in relation to Spanish water policy legislation. In the mid 1990s, as an A-Level project, I studied the severe drought affecting Spain, its interregional water conflicts and the Socialist Government's Draft Plan Hidrológico Nacional 1993 (PHN, 1993). This was aimed at redressing the country's hydrological imbalance by the construction of 272 dams and 13 interregional water-transfer schemes diverting vast quantities of water from the rivers of the north and interior by means of to the Mediterranean regions. Included in this Plan was the transfer of 1,275 cubic hectometres (hm³) of water per year from the Ebro. My interest in *aragonesismo* and Aragonese Nationalism developed in 2000 while working on a Masters Degree dissertation.¹ This analysed the conflict of interests arising from the Partido Popular (PP) government's proposals to implement its national water plan, Plan Hidrológico Nacional 2000 (PHN, 2000). In a state made up of 17 autonomous regions there was a growing tendency by these regions to promote their own interests and seek greater control of their community's resources. In the post-Franco period Aragon saw the emergence or re-emergence of two regionalist/nationalist parties, the Partido Aragonés (PAR) and the Chunta Aragonesista (CHA), which made possible the introduction of a range of territorial and nationalist tenets into the water equation.²

The proposed PHN, 2000 caused a heated dispute between Aragon and the Spanish government. The most controversial element of the Plan was the proposal to transfer 1050 hm³ of water from the Ebro to the coastal regions of Catalonia, Valencia and Murcia. The proposal met with strong opposition in Aragon with no fewer than 12

¹ In a political sense, *aragonesismo* can be defined as a concept that gives priority to Aragonese territorial interests and explicit recognition of self-government. In a cultural sense it is an affirmation of national distinctiveness and a desire to preserve a unique identity, history, language and culture. Whilst all nationalists are *aragonesistas* it is possible to be an *aragonesista* without being a nationalist. Moreover *aragonesista* issues are defended by many who do not belong to or vote for one of Aragon's territorial political parties. This will be discussed in greater depth in section Definition of Terminology.

² Brenda Reed, 'An Analysis of the Conflict of Interests arising from Proposals to Implement a State-wide Development Project within the Context of Regional Autonomy and New Nation-building in a Non-historical Community. The Case of Aragon and the Plan Hidrológico Nacional', (Unpublished Master's dissertation, Northumbria University 2002).

mass demonstrations between 2000 and 2004 bringing up to fifty percent of its population on to the streets at any one time. This was not the first instance of opposition to the transfer of water from the Ebro. There were antecedents in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, together with numerous examples of the Ebro and water policy ‘fuelling’ the reactive side of *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism. From the early part of the twentieth century, this reactive aspect played an important role in nationalist myths, symbolism and visions of Aragon’s future.

My doctoral research programme began in 2003, in a period characterised by mass demonstrations and heightened emotions around water and the Ebro in Aragon. That year was one of electoral ascendancy for the nationalist party CHA, rising from 5 to 9 seats in the Regional Parliament in the 2003 elections. Having gained a representative in Madrid, J. A. Labordeta two years earlier, its vote in General Elections rose from 3,157 votes in 1989 to 94,252 in 2004. This highly volatile atmosphere was defused somewhat by the defeat of Spain’s PP government in 2004 and the shelving of the proposed Ebro transfer by the incoming PSOE government of Rodríguez Zapatero and his party’s commitment to finding other solutions to the water question such as desalination.³ The shelving of PHN 2000 has not, however, put the question of water transfer to rest. New Statutes of Autonomy approved in Catalonia and Valencia (2006) retained clauses relating to future water transfer and, in 2008, the Zapatero government approved a mini-transfer from the Ebro to Barcelona.⁴ In addition, the leader of Spain’s PP, Mariano Rajoy, remains committed to the Ebro transfer as envisaged in PHN 2000. Interestingly, during the course of this study, regional elections in Aragon in 2007 saw a major turnaround in the electoral fortunes of the CHA, with the loss of 5 of their seats in the Regional Parliament and the loss of their only Deputy in the Congress. This turnaround could in part be attributed to the perceived removal of the threat to the Ebro and also to the party’s emphasis on socialist and ecological tenets rather than a more nationalist approach and problematic pacts in Zaragoza local government.

³ 18 June 2004 the Council of Ministers approved the Real Decreto-Ley which revoked the Ebro Transfer.

⁴ The Valencian Statute retains the ‘right of redistributing from surpluses coming from rivers’ (Ley Orgánica 1/2006, 10 April 2006).

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My greatest thanks must go to my family, whose holidays were frequently spent exploring Aragon, for their patience, encouragement and unconditional support without which I would not have completed this project. To them I dedicate this work.

Declaration

I declare that the work contained in this thesis has not been submitted for any other award and that it is all my own work.

Name:

Signature:

Date:

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AP	Alianza Popular
CAIC	Candidatura Aragonesa Independiente de Centro
CDS	Centro Democrático y Social
CHA	Chunta Aragonesista
CHE	Confederación Hidrográfica del Ebro
COAGRET	Coordinadora de Afectados por Grandes Embalses y Trasvases
COAPE	Coordinadora Aragonesa de Pueblos Afectados por Embalses.
DGA	Diputación General de Aragón
DMA	Directiva Marco del Agua (European Water Framework Directive)
DPZ	Diputación Provincial de Zaragoza
IU	Izquierda Unida
MNA	Movimiento Nacionalista Aragonés
PAR	Partido Aragonés (Regionalista)
PCA	Partido Comunista de Aragón
PHN 1993	Plan Hidrológico Nacional 1993
PHN 2000	Plan Hidrológico Nacional 2000
PP	Partido Popular
PSA	Partido Socialista de Aragón
PSOE	Partido Socialista Obrero Español
PSP	Partido Socialista Popular
REA	Rolde de Estudios Aragoneses
RENA	Rolde de Estudios Nacionalista Aragonés
UA	Unión Aragonesista
UCD	Unión de Centro Democrático
URA	Unión Regionalista Aragonesa

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

1879	Ley de Aguas. Failed to be implemented at any significant level
1902	First major National Hydraulic Works Plan
1917	Unión Regionalista Aragonesa set up in Barcelona
1917	First edition of <i>El Ebro</i> 1917-1936
1919	Unión Regionalista Aragonesa renamed Unión Aragonesista
1923-1930	General Primo de Rivera's uprising in Barcelona in September 1923 marked beginning of 7 years of dictatorship. Reduction in <i>aragonesista</i> activities
1926	Confederación Hidrográfica del Ebro (CHE) created
1931-1936	Second Republic allowed the development of process leading to political autonomy in 'comunidades históricas diferenciadas' and produced Statutes of Autonomy in Catalonia, Basque Country and Galicia
1933	Formation of Estado Aragonés (EA), first republican nationalist political party
1933	Pardo Plan
1936	Autonomist Congreso de Caspe. Approved basis for draft Statute of Autonomy for Aragon, however, process cut-short by outbreak of Civil War
1936-1978	Franco Dictatorship. Spain embarked on programme of large-scale dam and reservoir construction.
1940	Plan Nacional de Obras Públicas of Manuel Lorenzo Pardo included proposal to transfer 200 of hm³ water from the Ebro to Tarragona, the Júcar and the Segura
1972	<i>Andalán</i> set up by group of left-wing intellectuals
1973	Approval of study of Ebro-Pirineo-Oriental aqueduct to carry 1,400 hm³ of water to Barcelona
1974-1977	Hipólito Gómez de las Rocas President of the Diputación Provincial de Zaragoza led campaign against transfer of water from the Ebro
1974	Presentation of 200,000 signatures against transfer project
1976	Formation of the territorial based socialist party Partido Socialista Aragonés (PSA)
1977	Candidatura Aragonesa Independiente de Centro (CAIC) founded by Hipólito Gómez de las Rocas
1977	Partido Aragonés Regionalista (PAR) founded by Hipólito Gómez de las Rocas
1977	Creation of Rolde de Estudios Nacionalista Aragonés (RENA), First nationalist organisation to be set up in closing years of the Dictatorship
1978	First tribute to Juan de Lanuza by RENA. Yearly event from then on
1978	Amalgamation of PSA and PSOE
1978	Movimiento Nacionalista Aragonés (MNA) founded
1978	23 April demonstration of 100,000 people in el Paseo de la Independencia Zaragoza for more autonomy for Aragon and in

- opposition to water transfers
- 1979** Ebro-Pirineo-Oriental transfer withdrawn as a result of Aragonese pressure
- 1979** Emilio Gastón recovered the initials PSA and stood in elections
Actions criticised by ex members of the PSA (Borrás, Fatás, Forcadell, Fenández Clemente, Labordeta and by ex members who had incorporated in PSOE (S. Marraco, J. A. Biescas, F. Beltrán, J. Bada, J. M. Badrés, B. Bayona, L. Germán, V. Piñeiro)
PSA moved towards nationalism and MNA
- 1979** II Jornadas on Aragonese Nationalism organised by RENA.
Participants included C. Forcadell, E. Vicente de Vera, E. Sarasa and Mario Gaviria
- 1979** PAR obtained seat in Regional Parliament (Hipólito Gómez de las Rocas)
- 1980** Legalisation of RENA
- 1980** III Jornadas on Aragonese Nationalism organised by RENA.
Participants included Chulio Briosó, Antonio Gargallo, Antonio Peiró and Bizén Pinilla
- 1983** Legalisation of MNA on the eve of its disappearance after 6 attempts
- 1983** PAR gained 13 seats (20.5% of votes) in Aragonese Parliament
IU 1, PSOE 33, CDS 1, AP-PP 18
- 1983** Birth of Coordinadora Aragonesa de Pueblos Afectados por Embalses (COAPE)
- 1985** Emergence of the nationalist political party Chunta Aragonesista (CHA)
- 1985** Water Act stipulated that both surface and ground-water resources in Spain are a public resource managed by the respective river-basin authorities. Outlined the need for a master plan, the Plan Hidrológico Nacional (PHN), to address the problems of water management in Spain
- 1986** The CHA officially came into being on 29 June
- 1987** PAR gained 19 seats (28.1% of votes) in Aragonese Parliament
IU 2, PSOE 27, CDS 6, AP-PP 13
- 1989** Inauguration of mini-transfer to Tarragona (50 hm³)
- 1991** PAR gained 17 seats (24.7 % of votes) in Aragonese Parliament
IU 3, PSOE 30, PP 17
- 1992** Pacto del Agua de Aragón. Signed by all of Aragón's political parties except CHA which did not have parliamentary representation
- 1993** PAR obtained seat in Madrid (1993-96). 1996 stood as coalition with PP
- 1993** Draft Plan Hidrológico Nacional 1993 put forward by PSOE
Government Proposal to transfer 1275 hm³ of water each year from the Ebro
- 1993** 23 April demonstration of more than 100,000 people in the Plaza del Pilar Zaragoza for full Autonomy and in opposition to the transfer of water
- 1994** 5 August approval or transfer of 10 hm³ water annually to Majorca

- 1994** 6 August 30,000 people demonstrated on the bridge and banks of the Ebro in Zaragoza
- 1994** Amended version of PHN put forward. Rejected by Consejo Nacional del Agua
- 1994** The New Water Culture Foundation set up in Zaragoza at the height of the controversy surrounding the PSOE PHN.
- 1995** Birth of Coordinadora de Afectados por Grandes Embalses y Trasvases (COGRET)
- 1995** PAR gained 14 seats (20.4% of votes) in Regional Parliament and CHA gained first representatives, 2 seats (4.8% of votes) IU 5, PSOE 19, PP 27
- 1998** Creation of Fundación Gaspar Torrente para la Investigación y Desarrollo del Aragonésismo. First President Eloy Fernández Clemente
- 1998** Finalised Planes Hidrográficos de Cuenca approved. Published Libro Blanco del Agua – white paper setting out its proposed PHN
- 1999** PAR gained 10 seats (13.26% of votes), CHA 5 seats (11.09% of votes) in Regional Parliament IU 1, PSOE 23, PP 28
- 2000** Draft Plan Hidrológico Nacional 2000 of PP Government. Approved 5 July 2001, Ley del PHN Proposal to transfer 1,050 hm³ of water per year from Aragon to the east coast regions of Catalonia, Valencia and Murcia
- 2000** Creation of the Plataforma en Defensa del Ebro y Contra los Trasvases in Zaragoza
- 2000** 8 October demonstration by 400,000 people in Zaragoza in opposition to the transfer under the slogan *Aragón, agua y futuro* (Aragon, water and future)
- 2000** Tens of thousands of people participated in Abrazo del Ebro in Zaragoza
- 2000** CHA gained seat in Madrid with election of José Antonio Labordeta with 75,356 votes
- 2000** European Water Framework Directive. *Directiva Marco del Agua* (DMA) Established a EU community-wide framework for water policy
- 2001** 25 February demonstration by 300,000 people in Barcelona
- 2001** 11 March 400,000 people demonstrated in Madrid
- 2001** Approval by Cortes of the Ley del PHN and the transfer
- 2001** 10 August initiation of the Marcha Azul to Brussels, 9 September 15,000 demonstrated in the city
- 2001** 7 October 200,000 people participated in the Fiesta del Agua in the Plaza del Pilar in Zaragoza
- 2002** 25 May demonstration by 10,000 people in Palma in Majorca
- 2002** 24 November demonstration in Valencia
- 2002** Aznar laid the first stones of the transfer in Murcia and Almeria
- 2003** PAR gained 8 seats (11.44% of votes), CHA gained 9 seats (14.44%) of votes) in Aragonese Parliament IU 1, PSOE 27, PP 22. CHA reached pinnacle of its electoral success with 97,777 votes however did not gain access to Aragonese Government. PSOE continued coalition with PAR. Pact PSOE-CHA to govern

- for the first time in Ayuntamiento de Zaragoza with Socialist Juan Alberto Belloch as Mayor
- 2004** [Transfer of Ebro shelved following defeat of PP in General Election](#)
- 2004** Re-election of José Antonio Labordeta to Congress with 94,252 votes
- 2007** PAR gained 9 seats (12.12% of votes); CHA gained 4 seats (8.17 % of votes) in Aragonese Parliament. IU 1, PSOE 30, PP 23. Electoral setback for CHA losing 44% of its electoral support and 5 seats. PSOE entered into pact with PAR in Ayuntamiento de Zaragoza
- 2008** International Exposition in Zaragoza with the theme Agua y Desarrollo Sostenible (Water and Sustainable Development)
- 2008** CHA lost seat in Madrid with loss of more than 50,000 votes, 37,995 votes. List headed by Bizén Fuster with José Antonio Labordeta as number two

Black – dates and facts relating to *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism

Blue – [dates and facts relating to water policy in both Spanish and Aragonese contexts](#)

GLOSSARY OF SPANISH WORDS

<i>aglutinador</i>	binding force
<i>agua/tierra</i>	water/land
<i>aragonesismo</i>	Affirmation of Aragonese distinctiveness and a desire to preserve a unique identity, history, language and culture and defend Aragon's interests
<i>aragonesismo politico</i>	Concept which gives priority to territorial interests and the explicit recognition of self-government
<i>Aragonesizar</i>	To relate something specifically to Aragon
<i>baturrismo</i>	Originally used to refer to peasant, rural worker and the less well-off in nineteenth century. Later took on pejorative, scornful, contemptuous aspect
<i>competencias</i>	devolved powers
<i>comunidades históricas diferenciadas</i>	historic communities with their own distinct identity
<i>comunidad imaginada</i>	imagined community
<i>conciencia autonomista</i>	autonomist awareness
<i>costismo</i>	After his death in 1911 Costa inspired a doctrine which gained considerable importance which advocated redemption through water and irrigation projects. Coincided with irredentism which in the Aragonese context is the conception of Aragon as a territory that needed to be redeemed through hydrological works. Politically diverse, taken up by republican, federalist, nationalist, autonomist currents
<i>desencadenante</i>	Something that triggers or unleashes a reaction
<i>discurso agónico</i>	discourse of misery
<i>españolista</i>	Centralist orientated as opposed to regionalist or nationalist
<i>foralidad</i>	Relating to Aragon's foral laws, <i>la foralidad</i> is based on a belief that Aragon is defined by its unique foral laws
<i>fuerismo</i>	Ideology associated with foral laws
<i>fueros</i>	Foral laws relating to historic rights
<i>hispanidad</i>	Spanishness
<i>huertas</i>	fertile irrigated cultivated areas
<i>ideoafectivos</i>	Neologism, which attempts to express the connection

	between ideas and feelings, in a particular way
<i>insolidaridad</i>	lack of solidarity
<i>interclasista</i>	In a specific situation, people of different classes come together or mobilise for a common issue
<i>irredentismo</i>	<p>Aragonese irredentism is based on a consciousness of poverty, backwardness and prostration and a conception of Aragon as a territory that should be redeemed. It coincided with a doctrine which became prevalent in Aragon after the death of Joaquín Costa in 1911, '<i>costismo</i>', which advocated redemption through water and irrigation projects.</p> <p>Mairal's definition of irredentism does not follow the usual definition as a doctrine which advocates the recovery of territory culturally or historically related to one's nation but now subject to a foreign government. He refers to Aragonese irredentism as the idea that the Aragonese live in a land that needs to be redeemed by water.</p>
<i>jota</i>	Aragonese music is identified with the <i>jota</i> . There are many varieties ranging from courtly to very fast. Danced, sung or both.
<i>lo aragonés</i>	sense of Aragonese-ness
<i>lo baturro</i>	sense of rural origin/identity. Frequently used in a contemptuous, scornful, derogatory manner.
<i>lo nuestro</i>	that which is ours
<i>mancomunidad</i>	Administrative unit as a consequence of an agreement of two or more municipalities in order to share resources and services. It has been substituted in recent years by the <i>comarcas</i>
Mudéjar	Term that derives from the Arab word <i>mudayyan</i> which can be translated as 'those who are allowed to stay'. Used from the thirteenth century to refer to things associated with Moslems who lived under Christian rule such as art and architecture
<i>moneda de cambio</i>	bargaining tool, one thing in exchange for another
<i>mudejares</i>	Moslems permitted to live under Christian rule
<i>nacionalidad</i>	nationality
<i>nacionalista</i>	nationalist
<i>nacionalismo aragonés</i>	Aragonese nationalism
<i>nacionalismo estratégico</i>	strategic nationalism
<i>nacionalismo romántico</i>	Romantic nationalism

<i>nuevo aragonesismo</i>	New <i>aragonesismo</i>
<i>Nuevo Cultura del Agua</i>	New Water Culture
<i>Nueva Canción Aragonesa</i>	New Aragonese music with a clear socio-political message that had its origins in the 1970s
Nueva Izquierda	New Left
<i>Padre Ebro</i>	Father Ebro
<i>patria</i>	Patria. The common elements of patria are one's land and sovereignty over internal matters
<i>padre de raza</i>	Father of the race
<i>raza</i>	Can be equated with what we now refer to as <i>etnia</i> or ethnicity
<i>raza propia</i>	one's own race or ethnicity
<i>regeneracionismo</i>	Regenerationism. Ideology prevalent in Spain at the end of nineteenth century and beginning of twentieth. Motivated by loss of colonies in 1898, rural poverty and need to regenerate Spain and national Spanish identity through agriculture and water policy. Joaquín Costa was a leading figure. As a social and political movement it sought to reverse Spain's decline through public works, particularly irrigation systems.
<i>resemantizar</i>	resemantise
<i>región de reserva</i>	region of reserve - referring to use of its natural resources to benefit other areas in a colonial manner
<i>regionalismo españolista</i>	regionalism with a centralist leaning
<i>regionalismo defensivo</i>	defensive regionalism
<i>teoría de juegos</i>	game theory
<i>tierra-agua</i>	land-water
<i>tierra seca</i>	dry land
<i>trasvase</i>	transfer of water
<i>unidad diferenciada</i>	unit with its own distinct characteristics
<i>unidad de cuenca</i>	unity of the river basin The term <i>unidad de cuenca</i> was the creation of Lorenzo Pardo, founder of the Confederación Hidrográfica del Ebro
<i>vivir de espaldas al río</i>	To turn one's back on the river

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Since the 1970s Aragon has been at the centre of heated controversies over central government proposals to transfer water from the Ebro to Spain's Mediterranean coastal regions and the scene of numerous mass demonstrations in opposition to these. Throughout the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries the Ebro has been used and perceived by Aragonese regionalism, nationalism and *aragonesismo* in a variety of ways. This gives rise to the possibility that opposition to the transfer of water from the Ebro goes beyond purely economic and environmental considerations and evokes deeper nationalistic aspects which see it as an essential element of Aragonese identity, patrimonial wealth and natural national heritage. The aim of the thesis is to analyse the importance of the Ebro in *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism by examining the different ways in which it has been used by *aragonesista*, regionalist/nationalist, and nationalist formations in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries to denote territory and homeland, national identity, patrimonial wealth, grievance and injustice, and as a powerful rallying symbol especially in the post-Franco period. Natural elements and features are not only iconographic symbols of group identity but can also become politically-contested resources, more expressly nationalistic if they are perceived to be under threat. The thesis analyses how defence of the Ebro has been used by Aragonese territorial parties to raise key nationalist issues, increase national awareness and assist in the nation building-process. It also assesses whether the Ebro is regarded as a 'core' symbol by *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism by examining the rationale and ideologies of *aragonesista* and nationalist groups, organisations and political parties and the degree to which it has been developed to its full symbolic potential. It considers how the Ebro has become inextricably interwoven with a wide range of *aragonesista* and nationalist aspects such as identity, myths, other symbols of Aragon, heritage, collective memory and future prosperity and how threats to it, in the form of proposed water transfers, readily stir up and reproduce feelings of a 'nationalistic' nature. At the height of anti-transfer controversies the Ebro appears to be a uniformly powerful symbol of *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism, however, as the thesis will show in-depth

analysis reveals many different derivations, contradictions, differences and paradoxes in how it is viewed in different periods and by different groups.

On occasions the terms political *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism have been used in an interchangeable way, for instance, by the former President of the CHA, Hipólito Gómes de las Rocas, however, in this thesis they are not used interchangeably. Whilst both of Aragon's territorial parties can be referred to as *aragonesista* only the CHA is currently referred to as nationalist. However, as we will see in Chapter 6 for a brief period from 1986-1996 the PAR adopted the term nationalist. This was not so much an ideological change, although there was an element within the party, particularly its youth section that did adhere to more nationalist tenets, but one of political expediency. This resulted in the PAR being described as 'strategic' or 'opportunist' nationalists, offering electors a specific product, 'nationalism', as a means of obtaining and consolidating power and seeking recognition of Aragon as a 'nationality'.¹ Nevertheless, during this period the PAR did develop the more symbolic and nation-building aspects of the Ebro through popular mobilisation and press communications and the development of a 'nationalist project' for Aragon, the objective of which was 'the reconstruction of an Aragonese identity as the only way to develop and progress our society'. In this period the Ebro viewed as one of Aragon's identity traits and a 'pillar' of future development.² Over the course of its history the PAR can be referred to as regionalist in its early phase, moderate nationalist between 1986 and 1996 and *aragonesista* in the subsequent period subscribing to a territorial ideology based on Aragonese land, people and interests. The main tenets of Aragon's nationalist party the CHA's ideology are nationalism, *aragonesismo*, federalism, socialism and environmentalism, with, as we will see in Chapter 7, nationalism not always carrying the greatest weight. The CHA combines both *aragonesismo* and nationalism arguing that nationalism is the political proposal that defines and identifies it in the political spectrum.

¹ See for instance Julio López-Laborda, Vicente Pinilla and Luis Sáez, 'Explaining the Growth of a New Nationalism in Spain: An Economic Approach', *European Social History Conference*, Noordwijkerhout, The Netherlands, 9-11 May 1996, pp. 1-21 (pp. 4-5).

² Eiroa, *Razones y retos* (Zaragoza: Mira Editores, 1995), p. 56. See also *Un proyecto para los 90. Por el progreso y la identidad de Aragón* (Zaragoza: Partido Aragonés, 1991) p. 55.

The case of Aragon is important for a number of reasons. Firstly, the Ebro and water have been significant elements in *aragonesismo* and *nacionalismo aragonés* and have been key elements in Aragonese regionalist/nationalist politics throughout the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Significantly, the nationalist group made up of Aragonese emigrants based in Barcelona in the early part of the twentieth century named its magazine *El Ebro* in recognition of the ‘father of their nationality’ and ‘giver of life to their land’. Secondly, since the mid 1970s Aragon has seen the emergence or re-emergence of two *aragonesista* political parties: the regionalist/nationalist/*aragonesista* Partido Aragonés (PAR), created in 1977 precisely to defend Aragonese interests in the face of the proposal to transfer water from the Ebro to Barcelona, which has had an important role in the regional Government since the Transition to democracy and the nationalist Chunta Aragonesista (CHA), whose active role in the region’s politics, from the mid-1990s, affords the potential for promotion of nationalist issues based around water and the Ebro. Thirdly, nationalistic defence of the Ebro has become increasingly linked with threats posed by central government proposals to transfer of water to other regions of Spain. Fourthly, in recent years water and the Ebro are increasingly being used in an ‘essential’ and ‘nationalistic’ way by the PAR to create a sense of Aragonese identity, history and future.

However, the use of the Ebro, and the popular sentiment it arouses, does not lie exclusively within the domain of Aragon’s regionalist and nationalist parties. State-wide parties in Aragon have softened and adapted their message making it possible to promote Aragonese interests while voting for a party with representation throughout Spain. The Ebro can not, therefore, be appropriated solely for nationalist purposes. Despite their party executives in Madrid periodically favouring water transfer from the Ebro, all of the Aragonese political parties claim to defend Aragon’s water resources and to oppose proposals to transfer large quantities of water to the Mediterranean regions. As a consequence, this research project has been designed to include interviews with leading members of all political parties active in Aragon to ascertain how their

perceptions of the Ebro, and the reasons for their opposition to water transfer, differ from those of the Aragonese nationalist parties.

Background

Aragon, located in the north east of Spain has an area of 47,724 km² and is the fourth largest of the 17 Autonomous Communities constituting 9.44 per cent of the Spanish territory. The ancient city of Zaragoza, Aragon's capital and main centre of population, is located on the river Ebro and houses over 70 per cent of its population. Although large in size, in 2005 Aragon had a population of only 1,269,027 as a consequence of severe depopulation and suffers the problems of severe territorial and demographic imbalance and rural depopulation. The Ebro river basin with an area of 85,534 km² cuts across Aragon from the northwest to the southeast occupying the central province of Zaragoza, the southern part of Huesca and the north eastern area of Teruel. It is the largest river basin in Spain. The Ebro river, the second longest and most voluminous of Spain's rivers, 928 km in length, rises in Fontibre in Cantabria and flows through the centre of Aragon to the Mediterranean Sea via the Ebro Delta in the province of Tarragona in Catalonia. Although it passes through nine of the seventeen autonomous communities 49.2 per cent is in Aragon.³ Whilst the climate at its source is Atlantic, most of its course is accompanied by a continental climate with low rainfall, scorching summers and cold, dry winters. Paradoxically, whilst the Ebro river basin has Spain's most voluminous river, drought is just as severe there as in parts of Mediterranean Spain. This is particularly the case of the arid expanses of central Aragon, Zaragoza, Alcañiz and the desert areas of Monegros and Bardenas. In spite of this on a number of occasions since the 1970s, central governments have proposed to transfer water from the Ebro to Catalonia, Valencia, Murcia and Andalusia. There include the Ebro-Eastern Pyrenees Aqueduct proposed by the Franco regime in 1973, which proposed to transfer 1,400 hm³ of water per year, and the Planes Hidrológicos Nacionales (PHNs) (National Water Plans) put forward by the PSOE and PP governments in 1993 and 2000, which proposed

³ In addition 10.8 % is in Navarra, 5.9% in La Rioja, 3.1% in the Basque Country and 18.3% in Catalonia.

to transfer 1,275 hm³ and 1,050 hm³ respectively.⁴ Over 50 per cent of the water to be transferred in the PHN 2000 was destined for irrigated agriculture outside Aragon. This included the transfer of 189 hm³ to the metropolitan area of Barcelona for urban uses and the transfer to the south of 861 hm³, which included 586 hm³ for irrigated agriculture and 275 hm³ for urban uses: 315 hm³ for the Júcar Basin, 436 hm³ for the Segura Basin, and 110 hm³ for Almeria.⁵ In addition, the Plan also offered ‘compensations’ of huge increases of new irrigated land in inland Spain in the Ebro Valley and Upper Júcar, with an increase in Aragon of 250,000 hectares, 50,000 in Navarre and 70,000 in Catalonia.⁶ In Aragon, however, the question of water transfer is exacerbated by the fact that a number of plans for hydraulic works and increased irrigated agriculture approved earlier by central governments remain pending or unfinished. These plans date back to the Riegos del Altoaragón (Upper Aragon Irrigation Scheme) 1915 and the 1992 Pacto del Agua (Water Pact), approved by the Aragonese government and endorsed by central government, which sets out an updated list of hydraulic works to be undertaken in Aragon.

Aragon has considerable industrial potential but at the same time has the problems of unequal development, a vast territory with depopulation that is the highest in Spain and an uneven distribution of population and wealth, with huge imbalances between Zaragoza and the rest of Aragon, with Zaragoza being referred to as ‘ZarAragón’. The industrial potential of the Ebro valley is considerable and the majority of industries are located there. Other dispersed areas of industry are Monzón-Barbastro, Sabiñánigo and Huesca. The so-called Ebro corridor is seen as the economic and industrial driving force of Aragon. There is the belief, particularly amongst the PAR, that the two routes to autonomy, the ‘fast route’ under Article 151 followed by its near neighbours the so-called historical communities of Cataluña, the Basque Country and Galicia, and the ‘slow route’ under Article 143, in which Aragon was placed, have detrimentally affected its economic development because the former were given more devolved powers and

⁴ 1,050 cubic hectometres is equivalent to one billion cubic metres.

⁵ Pedro Arrojo, ‘Spanish National Hydrological Plan: Reasons for its Failure and Arguments for the Future’, *Official Journal of the International Water Resources Association*, 28.3 (2003), 295-302 (p. 295).

⁶ Arrojo, ‘Spanish National Hydrological Plan’, p. 295.

increased budgets which allow them to carryout infrastructure works, economic promotion and invest more in industry, training, research and development, employment and technology which places them in a better position to compete for and capture investments.⁷ Thus, full autonomy is a key factor in territorial competitiveness. Added to this, in terms of opportunity costs water transfer is seen as having a detrimental effect in terms of attracting firms and creating wealth by committing a specified annual amount of water to transfer. Water is seen as providing opportunities for territorial rebalance and internal development in Aragon and the attraction of service industries that accompany it.

A major problem faced by Aragon is depopulation. Since 1900 its population has grown by only 37 per cent compared with 234 per cent for Spain as a whole.⁸ Today two of its provinces have a significantly lower population than in 1900, Huesca 15 per cent less and Teruel 44 per cent less with 25 of the 33 districts suffering population loss over the course of the twentieth century, 15 of them having fewer than 10 inhabitants per km².⁹ A few gains have occurred where irrigated agriculture has succeeded in preventing further losses. In districts where population has increased this has been due mainly to industry and the service sector or because the districts are administrative centres of the provincial capitals. Rural hardship and Aragon's central position between the main centres of Spanish industrialisation, Barcelona and the Basque Country, and the developing cities of Madrid and Valencia saw huge outward emigration. Zaragoza itself was responsible for large-scale internal rural-urban emigration. Currently, 276,380 people of Aragonese origin, equivalent to 23 per cent of its current population, live in other regions of Spain. The largest concentrations are in the provinces of Barcelona (102,874), Madrid (32,086) and Valencia (31,151) where they have created migratory networks.¹⁰ Since 2001 the pace of depopulation has slowed down and there has been some inward immigration, however, the problem of depopulation has been overtaken by negative natural growth in

⁷ Eiroa, *Razones y retos*, p. 19.

⁸ Vicente Pinilla, María-Isabel Ayuda, Luis-Antonio Sáez, 'Rural Depopulation and the Migration Turnaround in Mediterranean Western Europe: A Case Study of Aragon', *Journal of Rural and Community Development*, 3 (2008), 1-22 (p. 5).

⁹ Pinilla, Ayuda and Sáez, pp. 5-6.

¹⁰ Pinilla, Ayuda and Sáez, p. 7.

Aragon's rural areas mainly as a result of an ageing population.¹¹ Whilst depopulation has been severe, a positive aspect of being surrounded by Spain's main industrial areas has been that Aragon, which is heavily agricultural, has responded by producing farm products to supply the expanding towns. Increased irrigation, modern diversified and competitive agriculture, sectors such as agro-industries and a north-south communications network connecting with France and Europe are therefore of prime importance. However, large-scale irrigation and communications schemes rely heavily on state funding. Increased irrigation has, therefore, been an integral part of *aragonesismo*, however, the 'hydrological visions' of the two present day *aragonesista*/nationalist parties are considerably different.

The PAR's 'hydrological vision' focuses on the need for the completion or implementation of promised state-financed infrastructures to facilitate the introduction of further irrigated agricultural land in Aragon arguing that if water is transferred to other territories before these works are completed this will be detrimental to Aragon's future development and, that until these works are completed there is no way of knowing if there would be surplus water for transfer. The PAR wants more land to be brought under irrigation as high productivity is seen as an incentive to halt the problems of rural exodus, outward emigration and concentration of population in Zaragoza. The CHA takes a strongly environmental stance and is opposed to the construction of further reservoirs and dams which have high socio-environmental costs in order to increase irrigated agriculture in Aragon or facilitate water transfer to other areas of Spain arguing that there are enough reservoirs in the Pyrenees. Its 'hydrological vision' is one of sustainable use of water based on improving existing irrigation schemes as opposed to the creation of more through major hydrological constructions arguing that existing irrigation should be modernised to make it more efficient and environmental. It does not state what it would do with the 'surplus' water that other areas want, however, it is arguable that without further regulation of Aragon's rivers through dam and reservoir construction there is no surplus.

¹¹ For an in-depth consideration see Pinilla, Ayuda and Sáez, pp. 9-12.

Aragon has a long history of harnessing its river systems to irrigate agricultural land dating back to the Romans. Initially, this was achieved through small-scale hydraulic infrastructures such as irrigation canals, dykes and water wheels built along the Ebro and its tributaries. Larger scale constructions such as the Canal Imperial de Aragon (1776-90) provided a huge leap forward and made it possible to irrigate considerably larger areas.¹² However, in the nineteenth century progress was slow due to the fact that progressively larger-scale schemes were required and the majority of projects came to nothing as a result of the failure to find private funding. The first major cornerstone of late nineteenth-early twentieth century Aragonese water policy was initiated by Joaquín Costa, who after his death in 1911, came to be regarded as an icon by the early nationalist group and the Regenerationist movement which was centred in Aragon. For Costa and the regenerationists state-funded irrigation schemes were seen as the only way to overcome rural poverty and social and economic problems prevalent in Spain at this time. The state's decision to complete works on the Aragon and Catalonia Canal in 1906 marked the beginning of state-financed development in Aragon. The second cornerstone was the Plan de Riegos del Altoaragón (Upper Aragon Irrigation Plan). Originally designed as a private plan it was adopted by the government in 1915. It was viewed with great optimism, however, failed to achieve its objective due to lack of state investment as a result of the instability caused by successive regime changes. Plans approved by one regime were not necessarily implemented by another, and still remain uncompleted: hence the continued reference to it in relation to outstanding hydrological works. The third cornerstone was the formation of the Confederación Hidrográfica del Ebro (CHE) in 1926 which was the first attempt to achieve integrated management of a Spanish river basin as a whole, a form of management which was subsequently extended to the whole of Spain. The fourth cornerstone was the Pacto del Agua approved in 1992 under the government headed by the PAR President Emilio Eiroa and endorsed by central government. The Pacto del Agua was unanimously approved in the Aragonese Cortes on 30 June 1992. At this time the CHA did not have representation in the Cortes and would have voted against the Pact if it had, referring to it as a 'Trojan horse'.¹³ The CHA

¹² Vicente Pinilla, 'The Development of Irrigated Agriculture in Twentieth-Century Spain: A Case Study of the Ebro Basin', *Agricultural History Review*, 54.1 (2006), 122-141 (p. 126).

¹³ IV Asamblea Nacional, p. 10.

disagrees with the recreation or construction of more reservoirs in Aragon and sees them as a prelude to water transfer rather than as a benefit to Aragon. The Pact's detractors also point out that the creation of reservoirs in the foothills of the Pyrenees for storage of water for distribution to the lowland area results in considerable population displacement, the Yesa reservoir having displaced 1,439 people resulting in a demographic decline of 24 per cent between 1950 and 1981.¹⁴ However, the Pact was viewed by many as a remedy to the ills that Aragon had suffered in relation unfulfilled promises earlier in the century. It set out a list of water regulation and hydraulic infrastructure works that it argues are necessary in Aragon. These include works on the Val reservoir to be carried out in 1993, the recreation of Yesa reservoir and the Jánovas and Santaliestra reservoirs scheduled for 1994 and Montearagón and Biscarrués reservoirs scheduled for 1995. However, of these works only the Val reservoir has been concluded after lengthy delays. The remainder have been delayed a number of times or shelved altogether.

Irrigation systems and irrigated agricultural land are a vital part of the Aragonese economy. Aragon and the Ebro basin were the forerunners of irrigated agriculture in Spain and in the late 1920s the Ebro basin had 54% of all irrigated land in Spain. With the completion of major works in other river systems this figure fell to 30% in the 1930s.¹⁵ By the end of the 1990s it represented 12% of the national total as a result of a vast amount of works carried out in some of the other river basins such as the Guadiana and Tagus.¹⁶ Initially irrigation in the Ebro basin had the aim of ensuring regular harvests of the same crops previously grown. However, there was a gradual shift towards more intensive new crops such as fruit and vegetables. The transformation in land use led to the development of associated industries such as sugar refining and fruit and vegetable canning. The more recent use of new technologies on irrigated lands has further increased productivity.¹⁷

¹⁴ Miguel Solana and Alfredo Solano, 'Nueva filosofía del agua', *Siete de Aragón*, No. 112, 17 - 23 May 1996, p. 14.

¹⁵ Pinilla, 'Irrigated Agriculture', p. 129.

¹⁶ Pinilla, 'Irrigated Agriculture', p. 132.

¹⁷ Pinilla, 'Irrigated Agriculture', p. 134.

The differences between output and demographic benefits afforded by irrigated agriculture in comparison with non-irrigated are considerable. For instance, agricultural production per hectare is 2.58 times higher in irrigated areas; livestock production is twice as high; industrial activities are more developed in irrigated areas; the average population of settlements in irrigated areas is 1,147 people whereas in non-irrigated it is 420 and irrigated areas have a higher percentage of population under 15 than non-irrigated.¹⁸ Irrigation allows much better productivity from the land and this and technological advances have led to a diversity of competitive cultivation that constitutes the basis of a good agro-industry.

Aragon currently has 411,900 hectares of irrigated land with a further 404,630 hectares deemed suitable for irrigation.¹⁹ However, in order to bring these under irrigation it is necessary to construct further large-scale infrastructures necessary to support this, such as the dams and reservoirs set out in the Pacto del Agua, which fall within the realm of state funded public works, finance for which has not been forthcoming. The PAR argues that the works promised in Aragon should be carried out first before considering the transfer of water to other areas as there is no way of knowing if there would be a surplus until these works are carried out. Therefore, it could be argued that central government is reluctant to carry out these works as they may rule out the possibility of future transfers to the coastal areas where there are more votes to be had, if there is no surplus. The CHA and environmental groups and associations defending of the interests of the people of the mountain area argue that the construction of these reservoirs set out in the Pacto del Agua has another purpose, to facilitate the transfer of water to the Mediterranean areas.

In the 1990s when the Pacto del Agua was drawn up and the PSOE was in government in Spain a trade off appears to have been envisaged, Aragonese irrigation in return for water to transfer, if in fact a surplus remained. The PAR, however, appear confident that

¹⁸ Tomás Giner Círcoles, ed. *Aragón, ayer y hoy* (Zaragoza: Librería General 2000), p. 155.

¹⁹ Aragon's plan for 816,500 hectares of irrigated land, almost double the existing, is fixed in the Aragonese Socialist Government's document 'Estrategias para el desarrollo de los riegos en Aragón' 1986.

there would not. Also, with a growing environmental lobby it is likely that massive reservoirs would not go ahead. When the PP was in government nationally (1996-2004) and favoured transfer of water from the Ebro as set out in its PHN 2000 it too was willing to invest in hydrological works in Aragon which would have facilitated both transfer and infrastructure that the Aragonese had been calling for.²⁰ However, whilst Spain's current PSOE government (2004-) shelved the possibility of transfer for the time being by overturning the PP's PHN 2000 it now favours a more environmental approach with the result that it is longer keen to carry out the works set out in the Pacto del Agua.

Water policy in the wider Spanish context

In Spain, drought and uneven water distribution are two of the oldest problems and, consequently, water policy has been of paramount importance throughout the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. National Water Plans have been in existence since the first Plan Nacional de Obras Hidráulicas of 1902, and the possibility of water transfers between river basins dates back to Lorenzo Pardo's Plan Nacional de Obras Hidráulicas of 1933.²¹ Pardo's Plan, regarded as a milestone in Spanish hydrological planning and an antecedent to later policy, used the natural hydrographical basins as planning units and recognised the inequality of available water across Spain's different river basins. One of the conclusions of the Plan was that Mediterranean Spain, which had the least reliable sources of water, had the greatest agricultural potential and in order to maximise Spanish national resources, it was necessary to transfer water from the Atlantic basins to the Mediterranean basins.

Over the course of the last hundred years the fundamental rationale behind Spanish water policy has remained constant: the transfer of water from 'water-rich' to 'water-poor' regions in the name of the 'Spanish national interest' with considerable propaganda to reinforce these concepts along with other oversimplifications such as the

²⁰ Interview with Gustavo Alcalde, 26 October, 2007, Zaragoza.

²¹ There was an earlier Water Law of 1879 but this was not implemented to any significant degree.

idea of 'water lost to the sea'. However, the political context has changed. For instance, prior to 1978 Spain's centralised and authoritarian regimes prioritised state-wide interests over regional. Opposition to government policy was rare as the Franco regime used coercive measures and overwhelming propaganda to silence its 'unpatriotic' critics.²² However, there were protests against the Tajo-Segura transfer in the late 1960s and the proposed transfer from the Ebro to Barcelona in the mid-1970s.²³

Post-Franco, attempts to redress hydrological imbalances on a state-wide basis by means of Planes Hidrológicos Nacionales (PHNs) have met with strong opposition from 'donor' regions. Consequently, since the Transition and the implementation of regional autonomy, no democratic government has been able to muster sufficient support from the autonomous regions to implement a state-wide water plan. The 1990s witnessed a series of heated interregional conflicts and demonstrations as a result of prolonged drought and proposals for large-scale interregional water transfers, including 1275 hm³ from the Ebro, contained in the PSOE Government's draft PHN 1993. Between 2000 and 2004, Aragon found itself at the centre of the water transfer controversy being the only region from which it was proposed to transfer water, 1050 hm³, under the PP government's PHN of 2000. Such opposition illustrates, firstly, the conflicts of interest which arise from attempts to implement a state-wide water plan in a decentralised state made up of various 'nationalities and regions'. Secondly, it shows the potential for the introduction of a range of nationalist issues by mobilised regionalist/nationalist parties in proposed 'donor' regions.

Following the 1970s transition to democracy in Spain, regional self-government provided a stimulus for the re-emergence or creation of sub-state regional or national identities, for which water and natural resources can have a symbolic and nationalistic

²² See Francisco Javier Martínez Gil, *El agua a debate. Plan Hidrológico Nacional, Pacto del Agua y trasvases* (Zaragoza: Rolde de Estudios Aragoneses, 1997), p. 15 and Carlos Royo-Villanova, *El regionalismo aragonés (1707-1978). La lucha de un pueblo por su autonomía* (Zaragoza: Guara Editorial, 1978), pp. 187-94.

²³ The Tajo-Segura transfer was to be the first phase of a vast programme of water transfers aimed at resolving the water needs of the whole peninsula. Today, it is the only major interregional transfer in existence in Spain although moves are currently underway to dramatically reduce the amount of water transferred each year (September 2008).

value beyond the purely economic. State-wide, David Saurí and Leandro del Moral argue that the ‘national Spanish identity’, upon which the ‘hydraulic paradigm’ built much of its legitimacy, breaks down in the face of regional identities for which water is ‘not simply a condition of development but a patrimonial asset’.²⁴ Moreover, they maintain that the same arguments that were developed on a state-wide scale 100 years ago are now reproduced regionally.²⁵

Introduction to terminology

Although an in-depth analysis will be undertaken in Chapter 3 some issues relating to the definition of terminology and concepts should be clarified, for instance, the meaning of Aragonese regionalism, nationalism and *aragonesismo* and, how they equate with the wider categorisations of nationalism and sub-state nationalism.

From 1978 onwards, the term ‘regionalist’ has been applied almost exclusively to the centre-right Aragonese territorial party Partido Aragonés. However, in the early 1970s it was applied to the left-wing movements that sprang up in the twilight of the Franco dictatorship, such as the Partido Socialista Aragonés (PSA) in the period before 1979 when it assumed a nationalist denomination, whose members could be defined as regional socialists. It was also used to refer to the ideas relating to internal colonialism in the Aragonese context put forward by the group of intellectuals who wrote for the predominantly left-wing magazine *Andalán*.

The use of the terms Aragonese nationalism and *aragonesismo* is subject to a considerable degree of ambiguity and debate, not least as to whether such things even exist. The terms *nacionalismo aragonés* / *aragonesismo político* are frequently used in

²⁴ See David Saurí and Leandro del Moral, ‘Recent Developments in Spanish Water Policy. Alternatives and Conflicts at the End of the Hydraulic Age’, *Geoforum*, 32.3 (2001), 351-362 (p. 357). They define this paradigm as a conscious policy of central government to develop water resources so that everyone throughout the country would have the water they required and cheap water would be available for economic growth. It is described as a form of public managerialism based on the ‘national interest’. It prevailed from the beginning of the twentieth century and lasted up to, and culminated in, the draft PHN of 1993. Its demise owed much to the changing political and administrative structure of post-Franco Spain.

²⁵ Saurí and Del Moral, ‘Recent Developments’, p. 357.

an interchangeable manner, especially in the context of the period 1917-1936 and later by the PAR's Hipólito Gómez de las Rocas.²⁶ Today, however, the choice of which term to use often depends on the target audience, the former for a nationalist audience and the latter to appeal to those who support *aragonesista* principles but who are not nationalists.

In a political sense, *aragonesismo* can be defined as a concept that gives priority to Aragonese territorial interests and explicit recognition of self-government. In a cultural sense, it is an affirmation of Aragonese national distinctiveness and a desire to preserve a unique identity, history, language and culture. Whilst all nationalists could be described as *aragonesistas*, clearly it is possible to be an *aragonesista* without being a nationalist. Moreover, *aragonesista* issues are defended by many who do not belong to, or vote for, one of Aragon's territorial political parties. Aragonese nationalism is a combination of *aragonesismo* and nationalism, with nationalism seen as one of its political articulations. This will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter 3.

According to Aragonese historian Carlos Forcadell *aragonesismo político* is the term which most appropriately reflects the Aragonese situation. He argues that it is difficult to find any formulation based on a *nacionalismo aragonés*, from either a political or cultural point of view, in the 'regionalist' proposals that unfolded in the first third of the twentieth century and those that were readapted in the last two decades of the century.²⁷ However, his view that there is a lack of any formulation based in a *nacionalismo aragonés* does not take into account the self-denomination as nationalist by bodies such as Rolde de Estudios Nacionalista Aragonés (RENA) in its early years and Chunta Aragonesista (CHA).

²⁶ This interchangeable use is demonstrated in the following statement made by Hipólito Gómez de las Rocas, *La participación política* (Zaragoza: Ebro litro, 1994), p. 40, 'Aragonese nationalism (also known as, *aragonesismo*) is much more than a party, it is an inextinguishable ember that will continue giving light when all of us have gone.'

²⁷ Carlos Forcadell, 'Las fantasías historiográficas del aragonesismo político', in *Nacionalismo e historia*, ed. by Carlos Forcadell (Zaragoza: Institución Fernando el Católico, 1998), pp. 143-160 (p. 143).

Today nationalism is a term used mainly by the CHA. In the late 1980s and 1990s it was used by the PAR, however, in recent years it has become more conservative. Between 1986 and 1993, the PAR moved towards the use of the term nationalism, dropping the word ‘regionalist’ from its name and seeking recognition of Aragon as a nationality. However, this stance was not supported by the whole party, in particular by some of its founders. In 1996, the PAR abandoned the term ‘nationalist’. In recent years, it has opted for the term *aragonesista*. In Aragon, the term nationalism is not used in the same way as by Esquerra Catalana (ERC) in Catalonia or Basque separatist parties where it signifies independence. Emilio Eiroa, one of the founders of the PAR, maintains that those who belong to the PAR wished to be nationalists in a constitutional sense, which is to say ‘in the sense of having personality, self-government and the same autonomy as the rest’.²⁸ The quest for equity with other communities is also paramount in Eloy Fernández Clemente’s interpretation, ‘we want Aragon to have maximum autonomy, no more; no less than the others and this is our nationalism. An idea frequently put forward is that of a federal state...to be a state within a plural state, a multi-national state, this would be our desire.’²⁹ In another definition, Chaime Marcuello posits that Aragonese nationalism can be summed up in three convictions. Firstly, that the management of daily life is best done from the local ambit. Secondly, that without one’s own identity it is not possible to live coherently. Thirdly, that nationalism is the only possible way to defend inter-nationalism. In this interpretation Aragonese nationalism is a political option in which priority is given to local action without losing the global perspective.³⁰ This idea of a global perspective, whilst acting in a local one, also forms an important part of former CHA President Azucena Lozano’s view of Aragonese nationalism as ‘solidarity to work on things that are far away and a global approach towards what is local’.³¹

In the wider European context the revival of ‘submerged’ ethnic or national minorities has been described by academics and the movements themselves using a variety of

²⁸ Interview with Emilio Eiroa, 17 February, 2010, Zaragoza.

²⁹ Interview with Eloy Fernández Clemente, 23 October 2006, Zaragoza.

³⁰ Chaime Marcuello, *Nacionalista? (y II)*, *Siete de Aragón*, No. 107, 12-18 April 1996, p. 23.

³¹ Interview with Azucena Lozano, 6 November 2008, Huesca.

expressions such as regionalism, nationalism, ethno-regionalism, ethno-nationalism, micro-nationalism, sub-state nationalism and minority nationalism.³² In practice there are many ambiguities and parties do not fall neatly into one or another classification. These parties are frequently collectively referred to as regionalist parties: a term which is often used to avoid an 'ethno' categorisation as some do not seek cultural recognition but seek only to defend and further the interests of the territory they represent and ensure a higher degree of self-government or autonomy.

Research Design and Research Methods

Methodological approach

An interdisciplinary and qualitative approach is taken and theoretical concepts are drawn from nationalism and the various disciplines that contribute to the nationalism debate.³³ The research practices employed are a combination of methods used by social scientists, particularly with regard to the interviews, and historians with regard to archival and documentary material. The use of a mixed approach for gathering data provides a basis for enhancing research quality, giving a more complete view from insider perspectives and checking the validity of the findings by triangulation. As Alan Bryman points out, triangulation refers to the use of more than one approach to an investigation in order to enhance confidence in the findings.³⁴ Triangulation, a term deriving from surveying, was originally conceptualised by E. J. Webb et al. in 1966 as an approach to the development of measures of concepts whereby more than one method would be employed as a means of ensuring greater confidence in findings.³⁵ The implication is that the results from one research strategy are cross checked against the results of another. In addition triangulation was frequently used as a means of combining qualitative and quantitative

³² See for instance Lieven De Winter and Huri Türsan (eds.), *Regionalist Parties in Western Europe* (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 1-13 and Emanuele Massetti, 'Regionalist Parties' Ideological Position: Do Structural Factors Matter', Paper prepared for presentation at PSA Conference in Reading, 4-6 April 2006, <http://www.psa.ac.uk/2006/pps/Massetti.pdf> [accessed 6 May 2007], pp. 1-3.

³³ These include sociology, history, political geography, political science, cultural anthropology, political philosophy, social psychology, international law and international relations.

³⁴ Alan Bryman, 'Triangulation', www.referenceworld.com/sage/socialscience/triangulation.pdf, [accessed 5/5/07], pp. 1-5, p. 1.

³⁵ Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 379.

approaches. However, the benefits of triangulation go beyond simply cross-checking to adding breadth, depth and completeness to the analysis and thereby enhancing the validity of the overall analysis and building up a rounded, fuller picture.³⁶ Also, if diverse kinds of data support the same conclusion, confidence is increased.³⁷ Triangulation has come to assume a variety of meanings, the most common being the combined use of two or more research methods with the goal of ensuring ‘convergent validity’ and completeness.³⁸ In this investigation triangulation is not used to combine qualitative and quantitative approaches but as a means of combining document analysis with semi-structured interviews to reveal aspects not covered in the written data and to offer explanations of phenomena from ‘insider’ perspectives, thereby facilitating a more complete picture. It is necessary to bear in mind triangulation is no guarantee of internal and external validity, however, it does help to identify weaknesses and increase confidence in the findings.³⁹

The advantage of a mixed approach is that evidence derived in different ways is more robust, increases overall confidence in the findings of the study and adds richness. By using two different approaches, in this case of this investigation analysis of multiple forms of written data and semi-structured qualitative interviews, it is possible to reap the benefits of both approaches and balance out their respective weaknesses. As Enrique Guillén Pardos noted this mixture of methods compensates the weaknesses of one with the strengths of another, in order to capture the social reality.⁴⁰ The mixed approach adopted here is based on archival research; analysis of contemporary sources such as literature and magazines produced by Aragonese nationalist parties, their Internet websites, press statements and interviews. This is accompanied by semi-structured, selective, qualitative interviews with leading figures in the 1970 movements and the Rolde de Estudios Aragoneses, editors of *aragonesista* magazines and newspapers, territorial

³⁶ Nigel G. Fielding and Jane L. Fielding, *Linking Data* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1986), p. 33.

³⁷ Fielding and Fielding, p. 25.

³⁸ Bryman, ‘Triangulation’, pp. 4-5.

³⁹ Fielding and Fielding, p. 25.

⁴⁰ Enrique Guillén Pardos, *Aragón, comunidad imaginada* (Zaragoza: Mira Editorial, 2001), p. 19.

party politicians, leading politicians from the State parties and water experts.⁴¹ One disadvantage in relation to this research project is that the method cannot be fully applied for the early period as there are no surviving individuals to interview.

Analysis of nationalist written publications and party propaganda provides a valuable insight into how these formations and political parties regard and use the Ebro, and provides a more consistent basis for comparison of its uses in different periods of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries than would be afforded solely by qualitative interviews. Firstly, it is no longer possible to interview any leaders or members of the early nationalist formation. Secondly, personal observations can be highly subjective and political and public figures are not likely to admit to using, creating or manipulating popular sentiments but rather would argue that such sentiments are primordial in character and popular in origin. Whilst it is important to recognise the value of insights and information afforded by those involved in the process under consideration, it is also necessary to recognise the limitations. From a Critical Theory perspective, the fact that most of the people offering views and observations are still actively part of the political and cultural milieu raises a number of questions about their objectivity. In order to create a balance between *aragonesista* and nationalist view-points and those of non-nationalists it was decided to interview politicians from all parties, with the same provisos about objectivity.

The focus of this research is on how the Ebro is viewed and used by nationalist and *aragonesista* formations as opposed to popular perceptions of it. The latter could form the basis of further research but a large-scale social survey of popular beliefs is outside the scope of this study, although it would be valuable in understanding why the Aragonese people are easily rallied in defence of the Ebro and water. Popular

⁴¹ With regard to the press there are two ways of approaching this. One is to analyse press statements and interviews with nationalist politicians with a view to examining the way in which they refer to the Ebro and their use of water-related statements as a means of raising key nationalist issues such as identity, territory and patrimonial assets. The other is to analyse how the Ebro and its place in Aragonese identity and future is represented in the press i.e. as a public discourse and the role of the press as a filter or creator of public opinion in relation to the Ebro. As the latter would constitute a thesis in itself, the investigation takes the former approach.

perceptions of the Ebro are addressed in so far as those interviewed view the importance of the Ebro in the collective imagination of the Aragonese.

Methods of data collection

A preliminary visit was made to Zaragoza in August 2004 to obtain material, ascertain the location of archives, libraries and party headquarters and to order the investigation systematically. The visit also afforded an opportunity to view significant features such as the Ebro, the semi-desert area of Monegros and the Basilica of Pilar and the architectural remains left by the various cultures that have inhabited Aragon. From the physical point of view, Aragonese territory is very diverse, ranging from the alpine ecology of the Pyrenees, through steppe areas around Teruel, to semi-desert zones such as Monegros and, finally the Ebro depression running through the centre. Such diversity can affect how the Ebro is viewed and limit its symbolic value for the region as a whole. Consequently, over the course of the investigation, visits have been made to as many different areas as possible, for example the rural area in the foothills of the Moncayo, Huesca, Jaca and Sabiñánigo in the foothills of the Pyrenees, Híjar to the east and Teruel in the south of the region. Furthermore, travelling to Zaragoza by road from the Mediterranean coast via the southernmost tip of the region afforded valuable opportunities to experience first-hand the evolution of Aragon's communication network, long a source of grievance.

Following the preliminary visit, between 2006 and 2009 archival research was carried out in Zaragoza, in the Archivo de Aragonismo Contemporáneo of the Rolde de Estudios Aragoneses, the Hemeroteca Municipal, the Instituto Bibliográfico Aragonés, the University of Zaragoza Library and the archives of the CHA and PAR. For the early *aragonista*/nationalist group, the main sources of information are its magazine *El Ebro* (1917-1936), located in the Hemeroteca Municipal de Zaragoza, *El Ideal de Aragón* (1930-1932) and *Renacimiento Aragonés* (1935-1936), which have been reproduced in facsimile form by the Rolde de Estudios Aragoneses, as have theoretical works by the founding fathers of the nationalist group in Barcelona, Gaspar Torrente and Julio Calvo

Alfaro.⁴² These magazines afford an important record of the ideas of the group from its inception in 1917 up to the preparation of a Draft Statute of Autonomy immediately prior to the outbreak of Civil War in 1936. They provide an excellent illustration of its use of the Ebro as a referent of territory and identity, as well as a symbol of Aragon's future in terms of economic development and prosperity.

For the Transition period, sources of written information include the *aragonesista* review newspaper *Andalán* (1972-1987), established by a group of predominantly left-wing intellectuals, which made opposition to the 1973 proposal to transfer water from the Ebro to Barcelona one of its main points of reference, and RENA's magazine *Rolde* (1977-). The absence of a nationalist political party made RENA the focal point for nationalist thinking and, as Antonio Peiró points out, to be an Aragonese nationalist in the late 1970s and early 1980s was to belong to RENA. Whilst RENA was not a political party, it played an important role in binding together the Aragonese nationalists. It had a clearly political component, and was the first post-war attempt to theorise on the subject of Aragonese nationalism and to promote Aragonese culture. The thinking of the *aragonesista* centre-right in this period is set out in publications by the founders of the PAR and in the party's magazine *Alcorze*.⁴³ In addition, a series of newspaper articles edited by the Institución Fernando el Católico, entitled *Aragón tiene sed. El Trasvase del Ebro en la prensa* (1976), focused on the proposed transfer of water from the Ebro.⁴⁴

For present day political parties, the main sources of written information are their own publications, pamphlets, Congresses and Assemblies, manifestoes, press releases and press interviews together with their Internet web-sites and magazines such as *Aragón*

⁴² These include Julio Calvo Alfaro's *Doctrina regionalista de Aragón* (Zaragoza: Rolde de Estudios Aragoneses. Facsímile Reproduction of 1922 Edition, Edizions de l'Astral, DL 1996) and *Reflexiones sobre Aragón: basadas en una conferencia pronunciada por don Julio Calvo Alfaro en el curso 1932-33* (Zaragoza: Facsímile Reproduction of 1933 Edition, Partido Aragonés, DL 1996), Gaspar Torrente's *La crisis del regionalismo en Aragón*, (Zaragoza: Rolde de Estudios Aragoneses. Facsímile Reproduction of 1923 Edition, 1986) and *Cien años de nacionalismo aragonés. Textos políticos*, ed. Antonio Peiró, (Zaragoza: Rolde de Estudios Nacionalista Aragonés, 1988).

⁴³ Hipólito Gómez de las Rocas, *La autonomía, a la vista* (Zaragoza: Guara Editorial, 1978) and Emilio Eiroa, *Razones y retos*.

⁴⁴ Institución Fernando el Católico, *Aragón tiene sed. El trasvase del Ebro en la prensa* (Zaragoza: Institución Fernando el Católico, 1976).

Libre and *Alcorze*.⁴⁵ Whilst intended as party propaganda and a means of informing their followers, these documents and magazines provide a valuable source of information on party thinking over time. In addition, speeches at ceremonial and festive occasions such as El Día de Aragón, the Fiestas del Pilar and anti-transfer demonstrations have been analysed together with poems and songs, with particular emphasis on songs by groups and individuals associated with *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism. Thus, document analysis draws upon a wide range of primary and secondary documents.

Oral testimonies and observations from leading figures and intellectuals associated with *aragonesista* movements, organisations and press, and those of current and former politicians, were obtained through semi-structured qualitative interviews. In order to assess how the Ebro is viewed from non-nationalist perspectives, interviews were also carried out with leading figures from all of the Aragonese political parties, the President of the Confederación Hidrográfica del Ebro, the editor of *Heraldo*, José Luis Trasobares, political analyst with *Heraldo* and *El Periódico de Aragón*, and social anthropologist Gaspar Mairal. Interviews with intellectuals and editors were carried out first to identify themes and act as a pilot as there was a greater possibility of follow up interviews if required. These included: Eloy Fernández Clemente, Guillermo Fátas, Gonzalo Borrás, Antonio Peiró, José Ramón Marcuello and Lorenzo Lascorz. Due to the tight schedules of the politicians only one interview of approximately one hour was envisaged. It was necessary to bring some of these interviews forward in order to avoid the campaign period prior to the Regional Elections of May 2007.

The purpose of the interviews was to elicit different ‘insider’ perspectives and insights into how *aragonesista* formations, press and political parties have viewed, or view, the Ebro and this influenced the choice of subjects, although political schedules and unforeseen circumstances at times dictated availability. For instance, the PSOE

⁴⁵ See for instance, *PAR: Diez años hablando por Aragón (1977-1987)* (Zaragoza: El Día de Aragón, 1987), *Un proyecto para los 90. Por el progreso y la identidad de Aragón* (Zaragoza: Partido Aragonés, 1991). For the CHA see *15 años construyendo el futuro. Aproximación a la historia de Chunta Aragonesista: 1986-2001* (Zaragoza: Chunta Aragonesista, 2001), *Alcorze* (1979-), *Aragón Libre* (1987-).

President of Aragon, Marcelino Iglesias, was replaced by Ramón Tejedor, President of the Government of Aragon for a brief period in the 1990s and currently Secretario General de Relaciones con las Cortes. The Vice-President of the Aragonese Government and leader of the PAR, José Ángel Biel, was replaced by the Environment Minister, Alfredo Boné, who subsequently had to hand over to Alfredo Cajal, Director of the Instituto Aragonés del Agua and a member of the Executive Council of the PAR. In spite of some last minute substitutions all of the politicians interviewed held top-ranking positions within their parties. For a list of interviewees, together with a short biography of each, see Appendices A and B.

The choice of a semi-structured approach meant that it was possible to focus the line of enquiry with specific questions, while allowing interviewees scope to develop their own line of response in a narrative form if desired. The interviews lasted between 45-90 minutes and provided valuable ‘insider’ insights and perceptions. They were recorded, later transcribed, and the information from them incorporated where relevant throughout the thesis to elucidate, complement, confirm and check the documentary evidence.⁴⁶

Existing Literature

To date, there have been no specific studies of the importance of the Ebro in *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism. Works on the river Ebro by José Ramón Marcuello study its topography, together with the myths, legends and traditions that surround it but do not analyse its links with *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism.⁴⁷ In general, the study of nationalisms in Spanish regions other than the Basque Country, Catalonia and Galicia is currently a neglected area by scholars outside the regions themselves. The only studies on associated Aragonese topics have been those of George Cheyne, who researched the life and works of Joaquín Costa, and several articles

⁴⁶ Two of the interviewees declined to be recorded. Notes were made by the interviewer during and after the interviews.

⁴⁷ José Ramón Marcuello, *El Ebro* (Zaragoza: Ediciones Oroel, 1986); *El Ebro de punta a punta* (Zaragoza: Ibercaja, 1995); *Mitos leyendas y tradiciones del Ebro* (Zaragoza: Certeza, 1996).

relating to the recent water transfer controversies.⁴⁸ Analyses of the implications and impact on Aragon of the water transfers proposed in the 1993 and 2000 PHNs have focused predominantly on environmental, hydrological and economic aspects and on the official arguments put forward by the Aragonese Government based on regional inequalities, sustainability and environmental damage.⁴⁹

Doctoral research is ongoing into the emergence and consolidation of the Aragonese nationalist party CHA.⁵⁰ At the time of writing the Martínez thesis had not been examined. In addition, a number of works on water in Aragon by Aragonese authors have recently appeared, coinciding with the 2008 Expo in Zaragoza. They do not, however, examine its importance in *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism.⁵¹

Studies of *aragonesismo*, Aragonese nationalism and Aragonese identity by Aragonese specialists take three main directions. Those taking historical perspectives concentrate mainly on the early twentieth century and Transition periods, chronicling the history of *aragonesismo* and *aragonesista* formations, the *aragonesista* press, Joaquin Costa and the early nationalist group in Barcelona. Less has been written on the present-day period and, in particular, on the use of the Ebro and the water transfer controversy by *aragonesista* and nationalist parties. This dissertation will, therefore, make a significant contribution to this literature as well as to debates on sub-state nationalisms and the role of landscape and natural elements in national identity.

⁴⁸ George J. G. Cheyne, *Joaquin Costa, el gran desconocido* (Madrid: Ariel, 1972), Anne McFall, 'The *Plan Hidrológico Nacional*: A Missed Opportunity or a Wily Exercise in Pragmatic Governance?' *International Journal of Iberian Studies*, 15.1 (2002), 40-54.

⁴⁹ See for instance McFall, 'The *Plan Hidrológico Nacional*', Narcís Prat and Carles Ibañez, 'Effects of Water Transfers Projected in the Spanish National Hydrological Plan on the Ecology of the Lower River Ebro (NE Spain) and its Delta', *Water, Science and Technology*, 31.8 (1995), 79-86 and Gobierno de Aragón, *Alegaciones al Plan Hidrológico Nacional de 2000* (Zaragoza: Civitas Ediciones, S. L., 2001).

⁵⁰ Michel Martínez, 'Emergencia y consolidación de un partido político nacionalista y progresista: el caso de Chunta Aragonesista (CHA) entre 1986 y 2004', supervisors Eloy Fernández Clemente (University of Zaragoza) and Anne Charlton (University of Borgoña). Work in progress.

⁵¹ See for instance Pilar Bernad Esteban, ed., *La cultura del agua en Aragón. Usos tradicionales* (Zaragoza: Rolde de Estudios Aragoneses, 2008).

Historical Perspective

The first generation of specialists on the theme of *aragonesismo* was predominantly part of the 1970s movement to ‘recover’ a sense of Aragonese consciousness and identity and address autonomic and democratic grievances following a long period of repression under the Franco dictatorship. These include Eloy Fernández Clemente, founding editor of the prestigious *aragonesista* review newspaper *Andalán*, Guillermo Fátas, José Carlos Mainer, Carlos Royo-Villanova, Carlos Forcadell and Luis Germán.⁵² All were contributors to *Andalán* (1972-1987) which made opposition to the proposed transfer of water from the Ebro one of its main points of reference. An analysis of how the Ebro was viewed in *Andalán* forms part of Chapter 5.

In the early 1980s, at the time of the ‘rebirth’ of the Aragonese autonomist movement, Antonio Peiró and Bizén Pinilla authored the first monograph to appear on the topic of Aragonese nationalism covering the history of Aragon’s nationalist and regionalist movements between 1868 and 1942. It traces the three lines of *aragonesismo político*, the conservative right-wing Zaragozaan regionalism, autonomist republicanism and nationalism which came into being in 1919 following the formation of the Unión Aragonesista in Barcelona.⁵³ The Unión Aragonesista and attempts at theorisation and ideology formulation by its founding fathers, Gaspar Torrente and Julio Calvo Alfaro, were central to this study however the importance of the river Ebro in the *aragonesista* press and poems dedicated to it in the group’s magazine *El Ebro* were not considered in any depth by the authors.

In recent years there has been a growing amount of literature on *aragonesismo*. This is partly a result of the work of the Rolde de Estudios Aragoneses (REA) and the

⁵² Their works include Eloy Fernández Clemente, *Aragón contemporáneo (1833-1936)* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1975) and *Costa y Aragón* (Zaragoza: Rolde de Estudios Aragoneses, 1979); Eloy Fernández Clemente and Guillermo Fátas, *Aragón Nuestra Tierra* (Zaragoza: Guara Editorial, 1978); José Carlos Mainer, ‘El aragonesismo político: recuerdos de El Ebro’, *Andalán*, 38-39 (1974), pp. 8-9 and ‘El aragonesismo político’, *Sistema* 8 (1975), 55-71; Carlos Royo-Villanova, *El regionalismo aragonés*; Eloy Fernández Clemente and Carlos Forcadell, *Historia de la prensa aragonesa* (Zaragoza: Guara Editorial, 1979).

⁵³ Antonio Peiró Arroyo and Bizén Pinilla Navarro, *Nacionalismo y regionalismo en Aragón* (Zaragoza: Unali, 1981).

Fundación Gaspar Torrente whose main objectives are to raise awareness of Aragonese culture and problems and promote the study of *aragonesismo*. Originally known as Rolde de Estudios Nationalistas Aragonés (RENA), REA is the oldest *aragonesista* organisation still in existence and was the first Aragonese nationalist organisation to be created after the Civil War. It abandoned its political activities in 1986 following the creation of the nationalist party CHA, which took on this role, and dropped the term *Nacionalista* from its name, to facilitate the inclusion in its ranks of *aragonesistas* who are not necessarily nationalists. To date it has published over 80 titles in the form of academic studies and facsimile reproductions of the works of Gaspar Torrente and Julio Calvo Alfaro. In addition, it has produced the quarterly magazine *Rolde. Revista de Cultura Aragonesa* since 1977 and from 1999 the Fundación Gaspar Torrente has published and edited an annual journal, *El Ebro*, named after the original magazine published from 1917-1936 by the Unión Aragonesista.

Most of the historical studies have concentrated on the development of *aragonesismo* from the early part of the twentieth century up to the outbreak of Civil War, which ended Aragon's attempts to draft a Statute of Autonomy. More recently, studies have emerged on the Transition and early democratic period by Carlos Serrano and Rubén Ramos, Luis Antonio Sáez, and Antonio Peiró. Historian Carlos Serrano, who heads REA's Archivo de Aragonesismo Contemporáneo, is at the forefront of the current generation of Aragonese specialists. He has written several books and numerous articles on *nacionalismo aragonés /aragonesismo político*, focusing primarily on the early part of the twentieth century and the Transition and is researching a doctoral thesis on the Transition period.⁵⁴ Of particular interest in relation to this study are his articles on the early *aragonesista* press, such as *El Ebro*, in the first third of the twentieth century and his examination of the myths created by the early nationalist formation, in particular their mythification of Joaquín Costa.⁵⁵ Costa was a central figure in the myths

⁵⁴ See for instance Carlos Serrano, *Identidad y diversidad. Escritos sobre Aragón (1995-1999)* (Zaragoza: Edicions de L'Astral, 1999) and Carlos Serrano and Ruben Ramos, *El aragonesismo en la Transición*, Vols. 1 & II. (Zaragoza: Rolde de Estudios Aragoneses – Fundación Gaspar Torrente, 2002 and 2003).

⁵⁵ Carlos Serrano, 'Los mitos aragonesistas en el primer tercio del siglo XX y el caso específico de Joaquín Costa', *Rolde*, 71-72 (1995), pp. 64-74.

promulgated by the early nationalist group and is regarded by many as an icon of the Aragonese community. Costa, water policy and economic development based on the Ebro are inextricably linked in *aragonesista* myths, hence their importance to this investigation.

Also significant are Serrano's analyses of the hydrological myths created by the early movement in relation to Costa and the Ebro and his work on the importance of territory and water in relation to *lo aragonés*, primarily in the early part of the twentieth century.⁵⁶ He argues that, viewed from a *costismo* perspective, hopes of Aragonese economic revival were based on water resources and the Ebro and the hydrological proposals put forward by Costa. Serrano argues that the Ebro is regarded as a father figure, an *aglutinador* (binding element) of Aragonese identity, and the life-giving element of the harsh environment that is frequently portrayed as defining Aragon.⁵⁷ On the transfer of water from the Ebro he concluded, 'everything surrounding the transfer symbolises the relationship between "what it is to be Aragonese", water and the defence of territory as a distinguishing mark of identity.'⁵⁸ He also holds that many of the keys to Aragonese identity come together in the water transfer topic.⁵⁹ Finally, Serrano argues that in Aragon the symbolic nature of water is a unifying element, bringing together different positions, although at the same time it can also be an element of discord: the latter being a reference to the mountain/lowland split with regard to water policy.⁶⁰

Surprisingly, there has been very little academic analysis of present day *aragonesismo* and *aragonesista* and nationalist parties. One exception is Serrano's *Identidad y diversidad. Escritos sobre Aragón (1995-1999)*, which is a collection of short articles written for Aragonese newspapers and magazines on topics of importance to the Aragonese in their recent history such as nationalism, political parties, water and

⁵⁶ Carlos Serrano, 'El aragonesismo costista, a examen. Los mitos hidráulicos y la retórica de la tierra', *Trébede*, No 12, March (1998), pp. 11-19.

⁵⁷ Serrano, 'El aragonesismo costista', p. 12.

⁵⁸ Carlos Serrano, 'Aragonesismo entre 1972 y 1982: cultura y práctica política', in *Historia del aragonesismo*, ed. by Antonio Peiró (Zaragoza: Rolde, 1999), pp. 131-56 (p. 143).

⁵⁹ Carlos Serrano, 'Aragón o la maldición de Tántalo', *Trébede*, No. 27, June (1999), pp. 7-13, p. 13.

⁶⁰ Serrano, 'Aragón o la maldición de Tántalo', p. 13.

historical grievances.⁶¹ They are intended to inform and provoke debate on Aragonese identity while providing valuable insights into historical aspects such as Gaspar Torrente, Calvo Alfaro and *aragonesista* ‘myths’. At the same time they illustrate the link between these aspects of Aragonese collective historical memory and present day Aragonese identity. Another exception is Peiró’s *El aragonesismo* which covers the history of *aragonesismo* and *aragonesista* organisations from the sixteenth century onwards and includes the most recent water controversy, which was at its height at the time of writing in 2002.⁶² Finally, in the *aragonesista* newspaper *Siete de Aragón* (1993-2004), Jesús J. Sebastián Lorente and Chaime Marcuello wrote regular, controversial and thought-provoking columns analysing aspects of *aragonesismo* both past and present. With regard to the Ebro and its tributaries, Sebastián Lorente argues that the mortgaging of Aragon’s natural resources is part of a ‘colonial policy’ on the part of the Spanish state in which Aragon, along with Castile and Asturias, are treated like Third World countries and their water, mines and energy exploited for the benefit of more privileged areas.⁶³ Marcuello presents a view of Aragonese identity in terms of traditions and community as opposed to symbols, such as the Ebro.⁶⁴

To date, a comparison of how present day *aragonesista* and nationalist parties perceive and use the Ebro, as envisaged by this investigation, has not been undertaken. Mostly, attention has fallen on other symbols of *aragonesismo* such as Joaquín Costa, Juan de Lanuza, the Virgin of Pilar and Aragonese history, institutions and foral laws. *Aragonesismo* has been analysed through its links with these symbols but not through its relationship with, and use of, the Ebro.

⁶¹ Serrano, *Identidad y diversidad*.

⁶² Antonio Peiró, *El aragonesismo* (Zaragoza: Biblioteca Aragonesa de Cultura, 2002).

⁶³ Jesús J. Sebastián Lorente, ‘Heterocultura y neocolonialismo’, *Siete de Aragón*, 18-24 November 1994, p. 10.

⁶⁴ Chaime Marcuello, *Señas de identidad* (Zaragoza: Siete de Aragón, 1994). Collection of articles that appeared in *Siete de Aragón*.

Political Economics Perspective

In the 1990s, Julio López-Laborda, Vicente Pinilla and Luis Sáez opened up a new line of investigation, analysing Aragonese nationalism from the perspective of political economics.⁶⁵ Their objective was to explain the recent appearance in Spain of self-defined ‘nationalist’ political parties in regions other than Catalonia and the Basque Country. The political economics perspective posits that, in the same way as firms compete in the market to attract customers to their products and maximise profits, so political parties compete amongst themselves in the political market, offering the voters those policies that facilitate vote maximisation.⁶⁶ The thesis put forward is based on game theory and attempts to explain the evolution of, and fundamental difference between, the political positions of the PAR, which it defines as *nacionalismo estratégico*, and that of the CHA, which it refers to as *nacionalismo romántico*. They define the former as not aimed at strengthening the cultural community but rather offering electors a specific product, ‘nationalism’, as a means of obtaining and consolidating power. ‘Cultural nationalists’, on the other hand, are described as those who wish to emphasise and stimulate the main characteristics of a given cultural community. From an ideological point of view they maintain that, in general, ‘cultural nationalists’ adhere to a left-wing ideology whilst ‘strategic nationalists’ occupy centre or right-wing positions.⁶⁷ Strategic nationalism, they argue, has been successful in the political life of three Autonomous Communities: Aragon, Canaries and Navarre, and has some incidence in Cantabria, La Rioja and the Valencian Community. Such a perspective provides an interesting starting point from which to examine the political opportunism of ‘strategic nationalists’, such as the PAR, in the late 1980 and 1990s and to explore the question of whether, in fact, Aragon has one or two nationalist parties.

⁶⁵ López-Laborda et al., pp. 1-21.

⁶⁶ López-Laborda et al., p. 4.

⁶⁷ López-Laborda et al., pp. 4-5.

Sociological Perspective

Studies taking a social anthropological or sociological perspective, by Gaspar Mairal, José A Bergua, Enrique Guillén Pardos and Chaime Marcuello, focus on Aragonese identity and water in the case of the first two and how the Aragonese see themselves as a community in the case of the latter two. Rather than focusing on the Ebro in *aragonesismo* an Aragonese nationalism, as is the aim of this research project, Mairal, Bergua and Guillén Pardos concentrate on how Aragonese society has been shaped by political, economic and social factors associated with water-related topics.⁶⁸ Mairal and Bergua examine the relationship between water and Aragonese society over the last century with particular reference to identity, social conflicts produced by the construction of reservoirs and dams and the cultural significance of water. They present a socio-cultural analysis of the effects of water-related issues on the Aragonese community from the beginning of the twentieth century to the Pacto del Agua of 1992 and analysis of the way in which Aragonese society has responded to them. These issues include the numerous large-scale hydrological works aimed at water regulation, Aragonese irrigation schemes and proposed water transfers to other regions. They conclude that the Aragonese have constructed images and metaphors to define themselves and create an identity around the topic of water.

Mairal's analysis of Costa is significant to the study as Costa was regarded as an icon by the early nationalist group. In his analysis of Costa and an Aragonese identity founded in a land-water relationship, Mairal contends that Costa constructed his own hydrological imagery around a notion already in existence amongst Altoaragoneses labourers, that of *la tierra seca* (the dry land). Costa re-elaborated this identity and linked it to water thereby creating the binomial land-water relationship underpinning the whole of discourse.⁶⁹ Mairal argues that whilst Costa promoted a message of Spanish regeneration, after his death this message was projected towards a redefinition of Aragon. He holds that this was possible because, although conceived with reference to

⁶⁸ Gaspar Mairal and José A. Bergua, *De Joaquín Costa al Pacto del Agua. Los aragoneses y el agua* (Zaragoza: Egido Editorial, 2000), Guillén Pardos, *Aragón, comunidad imaginada*.

⁶⁹ Mairal and Bergua, *De Joaquín Costa al Pacto del Agua*, pp. 13-32.

the Spanish nation, Costa conceptualised his doctrine in Aragon, especially in relation to redemption through agriculture and his water policy, an aspect which was paramount in the writings of the early nationalist group.⁷⁰ He argues that Costa introduced an aspect that was specific to Aragonese identity, a determinant 'disequilibrium', which lies at the root of Aragonese irredentism; namely that the land dries out and the people are forced to leave it. Around this, Costa constructed a *discurso agónico* (discourse of misery), which he contextualised in Aragon, and in particular in Altoaragón.⁷¹ The Aragonese identity created out of Costa's discourse was elaborated after his death by early nationalists such as Torrente and Calvo Alfaro and newspapers such as *Heraldo de Aragón* in the period leading up to the Congress of Caspe and the drafting of a Statute of Autonomy in 1936. The fact that the land dries out and the people abandon it gives rise to Costa's prophetic discourse, that is the creation of an identity based on the reality of 'imbalance' and the promise of restoring balance and redemption through water.

Bergua examines the various discourses involved in the water conflict in Aragon: the *economicista* discourse of the institutions (both state and Aragonese), the *biologicista* discourse of the ecological movement and the *nacionalista* discourse of both central and peripheral nationalism, including regionalism.⁷² The dominant *economicista* discourse, he argues, gives water an economic exchange value and is used in different ways by the central administration, the regions with water and the regions without water. The same is true of the *biologicista*, which also gives an economic exchange value to water and is used to criticise the proposed transfer of water from one area to another. The *nacionalista* discourse usually ascribes a political value to water and brings into the equation a number of other actors and complex *ideoafectivos*.⁷³ He argues that in *aragonesismo* the theoretical 'Aragonese thirst', popularised in the 1980s by a series of

⁷⁰ Gaspar Mairal, *La identidad de los aragoneses* (Zaragoza: Egido Editorial, 1997), p. 82.

⁷¹ Mairal, *La identidad*, p. 83. As will be demonstrated in this thesis this discourse is prevalent in many of the songs of José Antonio Labordeta.

⁷² See Mairal and Bergua, *De Joaquín Costa al Pacto del Agua* and José A. Bergua, 'El pluriverso del agua. Discursos, imaginarios y contratos en el conflicto del agua', <<http://www.unizar.es/fnca/congresos/congreso1/docum/ponen/402.pdf>> [accessed 7/8/06]. Theoretically risk-society presupposes that each social actor perceives different dangers and desires different securities.

⁷³ *Ideofectivos* - neologism, which attempts to express the connection between ideas and feelings, in a particular way.

articles entitled *Aragón tiene sed también*, has always occupied a central place.⁷⁴ The *aragonesista* discourse also gives water a value in terms of identity and ‘us/them’ and introduces a cultural/ethnic aspect into the discussion. However, as Bergua points out, it tends to focus its argument in terms of unequal exchange, exploitation and robbery because the dominant ‘constitutional’ discourse precludes alternatives, a conclusion also reached in this thesis.⁷⁵

In Bergua’s analysis of editorials in the Aragonese press, notably *Heraldo de Aragón*, he draws attention to the influence on ‘public opinion’ of stereotypes and arguments produced by the Aragonese media. Here, the necessity to retain water for Aragon’s future development is defended within the framework of a nation-state defined in terms of a ‘community of interests’ and the principle of reciprocity. At times it is the state, and at times the other autonomous communities, that will benefit from water policy. This discourse accuses the richer and more densely populated communities of wasting water on golf courses and other luxuries. The state, it maintains, is controlled by political parties which gain power as a result of the votes of these richer, more densely populated areas; it betrays the principle of territorial balance and it seeks to placate powerful interest groups such as the ‘irrigators’ and industrialists of the Mediterranean Arch, which consists of the communities of Catalonia, Valencia, Murcia. The overall conclusion that can be drawn from this method of discourse analysis is the existence, both in the controversy surrounding the proposed transfer of water and in Aragonese regionalist/nationalist politics, of a multiplicity of discourses, never static and varying according to the period under consideration.

Guillén Pardos analyses the impact on Aragonese society of the mass demonstrations for autonomy, defence of water resources, and recognition of Aragon as a *nacionalidad* in the period 1992-2001.⁷⁶ He concludes that whilst the majority of Aragonese have continued to live as Spaniards, for many the conflicts generated by the quest for full

⁷⁴ Bergua points out that Mairal argues that the origin of this concept can be traced back to the interpretation given to certain of Costa’s texts. See Mairal, *La identidad*, pp. 83-5.

⁷⁵ Mairal and Bergua, *De Joaquín Costa al Pacto del Agua*, p. 130.

⁷⁶ Guillén Pardos, *Aragón, comunidad imaginada*.

autonomy and opposition to the transfer of water from the Ebro have become associated with identity.⁷⁷ His argument is that identity can be constructed through symbols such as the Ebro and the Virgin of Pilar via new communication media.⁷⁸

Guillén Pardos's study, like those of Mairal and Bergua, focuses on cultural, social and political events that have shaped Aragon as a community. Rather than analysing how symbols such as the Ebro, San Jorge and the Virgin of Pilar are utilised by *aragonesista* and nationalist formations he focuses on their use by the media and the Aragonese PAR led Government of the early 1990s and the effect this had on Aragonese society and collective identity. At the beginning of the next decade he contends that the position taken by the Aragonese PSOE-PAR coalition Government in its publicity campaign in opposition to water transfer in 2000 was also one of combining the Ebro and the Virgin of Pilar under the slogan, 'El Ebro pilar de Aragón.'⁷⁹ He concludes that symbols such as *el Pilar*, the Ebro, the *jota* and *lo baturro*, and the social practices that go with them are associated with conservative *aragonesismo* (the centre-right *aragonesismo* of the PAR), whilst the academic discourse of *aragonesismo* is based on *la foralidad* (relating to Aragon's foral laws); the discourse followed by *Andalán* and the *aragonesista* left of the 1970s and early 1980s was based in the liberal *aragonesismo* of the nineteenth century. He does not postulate as to what discourse is followed by the present day *aragonesista* left nationalist party CHA.

Whilst the perspectives and methodologies employed by these scholars differ from those used in this current study, many of the points they raise are concordant with its findings. These include the importance of protest in opposition to the transfer of water from the Ebro in raising collective consciousness, affirming a sense of imagined community and canalising feelings of victimisation and unequal treatment against 'outside enemies'. Moreover, the incorporation of the community's traditional symbols and commemorative occasions with demonstrations against water transfers, an important

⁷⁷ Enrique Guillén Pardos, 'Medios y sociedad en Aragón: discursos, producción de identidad y relaciones de poder' (Unpublished doctoral thesis: University of Barcelona, 2001) examines the processes at work in the mobilisation against the PHN; *Aragón comunidad imaginada*, 4.1.1 (p.14).

⁷⁸ Guillén Pardos, *Aragón comunidad imaginada*, p. 24.

⁷⁹ Cited in Guillén Pardos, *Aragón comunidad imaginada*, p. 129.

aspect in my study, is an area touched upon, although not developed in detail, by Guillén Pardos.

Finally, in a collection of socio-political articles that originally appeared in the *aragonesista* weekly political review newspaper *Siete de Aragón*, Chaime Marcuello presents an alternative view of Aragonese identity in which the Ebro does not figure.⁸⁰ Interestingly, in Altoaragón, his place of birth, the importance of the Ebro, Costa and water is not viewed in the same way as in the lowland area due partly to the detrimental effects that dams and reservoirs have had on this area. Consequently, he does not view identity in terms of these symbols and myths but instead in terms of traditions and community. These articles were written in the early 1990s in a period just before the CHA gained a significant political position and there was a vacuum in the defence of Aragonese identity from a left-wing *aragonesista* political perspective. They provide an example of an *aragonesista* discourse not overtly nationalistic, based on the will to be ‘a community/Aragonese’ and citizen participation in their own government.⁸¹ The emphasis is on the need for participative democracy in order to create currents of opinion and take more responsibility. From this perspective, the Ebro would fall into the realm of political identity as opposed to cultural.

In a later work Marcuello, Bielsa and Clemente employ a holistic and sociocybernetics approach to water management and water conflicts in Spain which examines ‘this multi-attribute, complex and interdisciplinary topic’ from economic theory, cost benefit analysis, sustainability and social discourse perspectives. It highlights common oversimplifications of the problem by the various actors involved. For example ‘water should be taken from where there is an excess to where there is a shortage’ to arguments that the Aragonese should ‘keep the water because we need it’ to ‘water has its own ecological dynamism which should not be interfered with’ to the more possessive ‘the water is ours’. These simplifications and Government campaigns to perpetuate concepts such as a ‘wet and dry Spain’, ‘water being lost to the sea’ together with nationalist

⁸⁰ Marcuello, *Señas*.

⁸¹ Marcuello, *Señas*, p. 159. Nationalist parties, he points out, defend the idea of people as a nation.

perceptions of ‘our water’ and ‘nationalist’ ideological visions linking elements of their territory with identity, are central to this analysis of the Ebro in *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism.⁸²

Hydrological, Cost-benefit and ‘New Water Culture’ Perspective

Studies by water and water management experts such as Francisco Javier Martínez Gil and Pedro Arrojo, examine the water transfer controversy from a perspective of sustainability, ecological damage and the ‘New Water Culture’ which seeks a more environmentally-friendly alternative than the huge dam-building schemes of the past.⁸³ Over the last 15 years, Arrojo has written extensively on water economics and has undertaken cost benefit analysis and socio-environmental analysis of water projects such as Biscarrués in the Aragonese Pyrenees.⁸⁴ He has shown that the expectation of transfer has enormously increased demand in recipient areas. His analyses of large-scale water transfers proposed by the PHN have shown costs exceeding benefits over the first 50 years together with high ecological costs. Dams would also block the flow of silt, sand, and nutrients that sustain the ecologically rich Ebro delta and fisheries. Significantly, whilst the focus of Martínez Gil’s work is the environmental aspects of water transfers, he also acknowledges the link between natural features such as rivers and the identity of a particular people.⁸⁵

Whilst this thesis is not concerned primarily with the environmental and ecological aspects of water transfers, environmental stewardship, the protection of Aragon’s natural heritage and the ‘New Water Culture’ have become increasingly important in the left-wing nationalist discourse. Whilst the link between traditional nationalism and modern environmentalism has been examined by scholars such as Jonathan Olsen, Daniel

⁸² See Chaime Marcuello Jorge Bielsa, Jesús Clemente, ‘Agua, sostenibilidad y modelo territorial’, Fundación Encuentro, Informe España 2008, (2008), pp. 255-326 (p. 326).

⁸³ The New Water Culture Foundation was set up in Zaragoza in 1994 at the height of the controversy surrounding the PSOE PHN. Many of its members are drawn from the academic field. It is one of the civil platforms that actively fought against Spain’s most recent National Water Plan and the inter-basin transfer of water from the Ebro. See Fundación Nueva Cultura del Agua <<http://www.unizar.es.fnca/>>

⁸⁴ See for instance Pedro Arrojo, ‘Spanish National Hydrological Plan’, pp. 295-302.

⁸⁵ Francisco Javier Martínez Gil, *El agua a debate* and ‘La nueva cultura del agua, el tiempo de los ríos’ <<http://www.unizar.es/fnca/duero/docu/p101.pdf>> [accessed 20 July 2006].

Deudney and Colin Williams it has not been explored in relation to Aragon.⁸⁶ These studies argue that environmentalism has much to do with protecting a sense of identity and that environmental despoliation and national decline go hand in hand. One of the outcomes of this association is nationalist political mobilisation around environmental issues and active co-operation between regionalist/nationalist movements and ecological movements. Arguments such as these are particularly pertinent in relation to this investigation where analysis shows that the Ebro becomes significantly more symbolic of Aragon, its identity and its heritage when it comes under threat from outside. Additionally, as the thesis will show the nationalist party CHA is closely involved with environmental groups, a firm supporter of the 'New Water Culture' and has shifted from the sentimental and Romantic use of the Ebro of its forbears, the Unió Aragonesa of Barcelona, to one that is environmentally orientated.

Structure of thesis

The thesis is structured as follows. Chapter 1 sets out the context of the research, the aims of the thesis, explains the research project and research methods and considers existing works on *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism. Chapter 2 locates the research within the wider theoretical context of nations and nationalism, examines these theoretical aspects and the importance of rivers in nationalism and considers the role of natural features and natural resources of a territory in relation to nationalism and the construction of national identity. It examines the main theories put forward by theorists of nations and nationalism focussing in particular on the relationship between nationalism and landscape/natural features. It then considers theories relating to territory; the symbolic and iconographic importance of the geography and natural features in nationalist politics and the articulation of national identity; economic grievances and sub-state nationalism, which for the most part are not covered in-depth

⁸⁶ Jonathan Olsen, *Nature and Nationalism. Right-Wing Ecology and the Politics of Identity in Contemporary Germany* (London: Macmillan, 1999); Daniel Deudney, 'Ground Identity: Nature, Place and Space in Nationalism' in *Return of Culture and Identity to International Relations Theory*, ed. by Josef Lapid and Friedrich Kratochud (New York: Lynne Reiner, 1995); Colin H. Williams, 'The Communal Defence of Threatened Environments and Identities', *Geografski vestnik*, 71 (1999), 105-120, <<http://www.zrc-sazu.si/zgds/pdf/gv71-williams.pdf>> [accessed 03/01/04].

by the main theorists of nationalism but by other disciplines that contribute to the nationalism debate. Chapter 3 provides an historical overview of the origins of Aragonese nationalism in the early part of the twentieth century and explores and analyses the concepts of *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism. Chapters 4-7 analyse the use of the Ebro by *aragonesista* and nationalist movements, parties and press in the three pivotal periods of their evolution, the first quarter of the twentieth century; the period leading up to and during the transition to democracy; and the post-transition period: the line of evolution being broken by the Spanish Civil War and the forty years dictatorship under Franco. They consider how 1970s and 1980s interpretations acted as a bridge to those of the present day. They analyse the importance of the Ebro in *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism with particular emphasis on its use by *aragonesista* and nationalist groups and political parties as opposed to popular perceptions of it. They consider why different *aragonesista* and nationalist formations and political parties have embraced some uses and not others, why some have embraced it to a high degree and others to a lesser and how these uses conform to different conceptualisations of national identity and civic and organic nationhood and different ideological orientations. This is followed by a comparative analysis of how the Ebro is perceived by Aragonese state-wide parties differs from that of territorial parties. Chapter 8 provides a comparative analysis of the changes in the way in which the Ebro has been used and viewed in the three pivotal stages of *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism, examines contradictions in the way it is perceived and assesses whether it has been used to its full symbolic potential by *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism and if not why not. The final section of this chapter sets out the overall conclusions of the investigation.

CHAPTER 2 SOME THEORETICAL CONCEPTS

This thesis is located in the general framework of nationalism, national identity, national symbolism and the role of landscape features and natural resources in relation to these. To provide a theoretical framework located in nationalism and identity construction and a conceptual basis for the subsequent empirical analysis, it examines the main theories of nationalism put forward by Anthony D. Smith, Eric Hobsbawm, John Breuilly, and Benedict Anderson. As James Anderson points out, 'particular nationalisms require detailed empirical analysis but this analysis has to be informed by a general theoretical understanding of how and why nationalism arose and how it 'works' as an ideology.'¹ The Ebro, however, and its constant albeit changing and at times contradictory relationship with Aragonese nationalism, is a complex and multifaceted subject forming part of the worlds of symbols, territory, identity, myths, collective memory, history, landscape iconography and essence of the nation on the one hand, and economic nationalism (patrimonial wealth, economic prosperity, economic autarchy), grievance, injustice and struggle on the other. As a result it is necessary to examine a number of additional areas of theorisation by disciplines that contribute to the nationalism debate; hence the interdisciplinary nature of the study. Theories relating to territory and the symbolic and iconographic importance of the geography and natural features in nationalist politics and the articulation of national identity, economic grievance and sub-state nationalism are therefore considered in the second part of the chapter.

Analysis shows that the major theorists of nations and nationalism give little consideration in their models to sub-state nationalisms and nations without states. Consequently, as Aragon falls within this category, it is also necessary to examine theoretical works that focus on the tier of nationalism below state level which, with the exception of some of Smith's earlier works, have been written predominantly by political geographers and political scientists.² Another area that receives little

¹ James Anderson, 'Nationalist Ideology and Territory', in *Nationalism, Self-Determination and Political Geography*, ed. by R. J. Johnson, D. Knight and E. Kofman (London: Croon Helm, 1988), pp. 18-39 (p. 37).

² See for instance Andrew W. Orridge, 'Separatist and Autonomist Nationalisms: The Structure of Regional Loyalties in the Modern State', in *National Separatism*, ed. by Colin H Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1982), pp. 43-73; Colin H. Williams, Introduction to *National*

attention is the symbolic and iconographic importance of the geography and natural features of a territory in nationalist politics and the articulation of national identity. Once again, it is necessary to refer to studies by political geographers. Furthermore, the main theorists have moved the debate away from economic and materialistic justifications for nationalistic sentiments towards arguments rooted in ethnicity or modernity. As these aspects are important in relation to the study of the Ebro, which has an economic as well as a symbolic significance in *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism, it is necessary to widen the research. Of particular relevance are Paul R. Brass' argument that resource-inspired mobilisation can convert communities into nationalities and Marxist-based theories put forward by Michael Hechter and Tom Nairn on core-periphery relationships and 'internal colonialism'.³ Marxist based theories along these lines were prevalent in the left-wing *aragonesismo* of the 1970s and still hold some sway in more recent anti-transfer arguments.

The employment of a wider, interdisciplinary approach opens up other important avenues for consideration such as the symbolic and ideological use which nationalists make of geographical features and the iconographic value of landscape and its power in representing national identity. Related work by anthropologists and political scientists, such as Mary Douglas, David Kertzer and Ioan Lewis, on the power of symbols are also considered with a view to evaluating its applicability to the Ebro.⁴

Main theories of nationalism and the nation state

Since the 1970s nationalism and national identities have increasingly attracted the attention of social theorists from at least nine academic disciplines.⁵ As a result, this

Separatism, pp. 1-16; Anthony D. Smith, 'Nationalism, Ethnic Separatism and the Intelligentsia' in Williams, *National Separatism*, pp. 17-41.

³ Paul R. Brass, 'La formación de las naciones: de las comunidades a las nacionalidades', *Zona Abierta*, 79 (1997), 69-99; Michael Hechter, *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development 1536-1966* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975) and Tom Nairn, *The Break-up of Britain* (London: New Left Books, 1977).

⁴ Mary Douglas, *How Institutions Think* (Syracuse State: Syracuse University Press, 1987) and *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology* (Penguin Books: London, 1973); David I. Kertzer, *Ritual, Politics and Power* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988) and Ioan M. Lewis, 'Introduction', in *Symbols and Sentiments*, ed. by Ioan M. Lewis (London: Academic, 1977).

⁵ These include sociology, history, political geography, political science, cultural anthropology, political philosophy, social psychology, international law and international relations.

review cannot claim to be exhaustive nor does it pretend to enter into the debate on the theoretical stances put forward by these scholars. Analysis was greatly aided by a series of articles produced to mark the retirement of Anthony D. Smith in 2004.⁶ Also of particular benefit were Smith's reflections at this time on the arguments put forward over the years by perennialists, primordialists, modernists, post-modernists and ethno-symbolists like himself, together with his responses to criticisms of his arguments.⁷ Within the vast body of theorisation the works of Smith provide an essential balance between the two extremes of the arguments put forward, that is the primordialist and the modernist.

The central questions that have divided theorists are the place of the past in the life of modern nations, whether nationalism creates nations or whether nations create nationalism, and whether nations are primordial in origin or invented/constructed. Primordialists maintain that nations have existed from time immemorial and argue that any homogeneity of language, culture or shared beliefs in a given territory was simply inherited from the past by that society.⁸ In addition, they hold that the world is inevitably divided into nations and that nations are organic entities, each with their own national spirits or essences. Early Romantic nationalist philosophers, such as Rousseau (1712-1778), Herder (1744-1803) and Fichte (1762-1814), are traditional representatives of this view. They argue that there is a close affinity between the people of an area and its natural environment and this determines the 'national character'. Modernists, on the other hand, hold that nations are a product of modernity and that any homogeneity has been created or constructed.⁹ The ethno-symbolist view put forward by scholars such as Anthony Smith and John Hutchinson is located between these two extremes.

One of Smith's major contributions to scholarship on nationalism has been to draw attention to the ethnic roots of what is, by and large, a modern phenomenon. Whilst

⁶ See *Nations and Nationalism*, 10.1/2 (2004), Special Edition.

⁷ Anthony D. Smith, 'History and National Destiny: Responses and Clarifications', *Nations and Nationalism*, 10.1/2 (2004), 195-209.

⁸ Steven Grosby, 'Territoriality: The Transcendental, Primordial Features of Modern Societies', *Nations and Nationalism* 1.2 (1995), 143-62.

⁹ For a modernist perspective see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991), Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*, Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

admitting that the ideology of nationalism is modern he has explored the pre-modern bases of nationhood in earlier examples of ethnic community.¹⁰ He emphasises the role of what he calls *ethnies* in the formation of nationalism and modern national identities.¹¹ In addition he highlights the importance of symbols of territory and community such as mountains, rivers and lakes. The approach he employs attempts to balance the influence of the ethnic past and the impact of nationalist activity and at the same time do justice to both the created and received elements of national identity.¹² Such an approach is important in relation to this study which considers how nationalists use symbols and popular sentiments, whose origins, they claim, go back to time immemorial.

Hutchinson rejects modernist claims that national cultures are recent inventions arguing that ‘what modernists have failed to explore is the relationship of nationalism to other belief systems and complex symbolic mediations and appropriations by which nationalists are able to canalize the past for their purposes.’¹³ We can also note from this statement the importance accorded to the role of nationalists in utilising and interpreting past belief systems, an element which is of crucial importance when studying how nationalists use belief systems relating to water and the natural environment.

Although modernists such as Hobsbawm, Gellner, and Anderson acknowledge the nationalist evocation of the past they give ethnicity no weight as a causal force.¹⁴ They are generally dismissive of continuities with ethnic groups arguing that they are small-scale and essentially pre-political. At best they provide the raw materials on which nation-builders can draw.¹⁵ According to Gellner, for instance, when nationalism invents nations where they do not exist ‘it does need some differentiating

¹⁰ Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Revival in the Modern World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

¹¹ Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986).

¹² Anthony D. Smith, ‘Gastronomy or Geology? The Role of Nationalism in the Reconstruction of Nations’, *Nations and Nationalism*, 1.1 (1995), 3-23, (p. 19).

¹³ John Hutchinson, ‘Nations and Culture’, in *Understanding Nationalism*, ed. by Montserrat Guibernau and John Hutchinson (Polity Press: Cambridge, 2001), pp. 74-83 (p. 77).

¹⁴ Hutchinson, ‘Nations and Culture’, p. 76.

¹⁵ Hutchinson, ‘Nations and Culture’, p. 75.

marks to work on'.¹⁶ Similarly, modernist John Breuilly criticises Smith 'for insufficiently appreciating that "ethnicity" is material used, indeed often invented, by modern nationalism rather than one of its essential conditions'.¹⁷ This line of argument raises the question of whether ethnicity is the product of 'nationalism' or simply jingoism or propaganda.

Attachment to homeland and its physical aspects

As the main focus of this investigation is to analyse the importance of a natural element in *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism it is necessary to consider theories relating to attachment to homeland and its physical aspects and what Smith refers to as ethnoscapas.¹⁸ Smith argues that the 'relationship between people and land is the product of *la longue durée* of continual myth making and the recitation of shared memories.'¹⁹ Earlier he wrote:

The passage of generations has wedded [populations] to the land, both in fact and in their (and others) perceptions. Their modes of production, patterns of settlement and folk cultures spring from their diurnal round of work and leisure, itself formed out of their ceaseless encounter with a particular environment.²⁰

Thus, ethnoscapas embody the notion of historic continuity derived from the interplay between land and people. Not only do later generations recall great historical events associated with their homeland but their present community is shaped by its long association with its land. James Anderson also points out that 'associations with the past are central to nationalism's territoriality, for territory is

¹⁶ Ernest Gellner, *Thought and Change* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1964), p. 168 quoted in Anthony D. Smith's *National Identity*, 1991, p. 71.

¹⁷ John Breuilly, 'The State and Nationalism', in Guibernau and Hutchinson, *Understanding Nationalism*, pp. 32-52 (p. 34).

¹⁸ Walker Connor, 'Homelands in a World of States', in Guibernau and Hutchinson, *Understanding Nationalism*, pp. 54-73; Colin H. Williams and Anthony D. Smith, 'The National Construction of Social Space', *Progress in Human Geography* 7 (1983), 502-18; Anthony D. Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); pp. 150-1; Smith, Anthony D., 'Nations and Ethnoscapas', *Oxford International Review*, 8.2 (1997), 11-18 and David Hooson, Introduction, in *Geography and National Identity*, ed. by David Hooson (Cambridge, Mass. and Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1994), pp. 1-14.

¹⁹ Smith, *Myths and Memories*, p. 269. John Armstrong introduced the significance of the *longue durée* in *Nations before Nationalism*. This concept advocates that the origins and formation of nations should be traced over long periods of time and not to formation in a particular period of time or to the process of modernization.

²⁰ Smith, *Ethnic Origins of Nations*, p. 183.

the receptacle of the past in the present.’²¹ The shaping a community by its long association with the land is important in relation to Aragon where it is argued that the identity of its people is shaped by the harshness of its physical environment and their constant struggle against it. In his discussion of *ethnies*, Smith refers to attachment to particular areas and symbols and to the land/people relationship as ‘a symbiosis between a certain piece of earth and “its” community.’ He argues that ethnicity is a matter of myths, memories, values and symbols.²²

Whether man’s attachment to nature and place has been harnessed by nationalism or created by it and the activities of nationalists is one of the burning questions in the modernist versus pre-modernist debate. The primordialist account of the connection between nature and group life operates within the general terms of territoriality and homeland. Adherents of a primordialist perspective view people’s attachments to their surroundings as a manifestation of basic socio-psychological needs and one that is universal and present throughout history.²³ However, Oliver Zimmer points out that those who support this argument are at a loss to explain why people’s interest in landscape can vary significantly over time.²⁴ I would suggest that this variation is a response to a particular set of circumstances, such as economic grievances, an external threat, emigration or exile, all of which heighten people’s awareness of their homeland and its natural features. All of these themes are central to the study of Aragonese nationalism. As will be discussed in greater depth later in this chapter, features of the landscape become more expressly symbolic of a nation if they are perceived to be under threat.²⁵

Mountains, rivers and lakes play an important part in Smith’s conceptualisations on homeland, collective memory, history and mythology of a community. They have afforded ‘a special place and provided the scene for historic events – battles, treaties,

²¹ Anderson, ‘Nationalist Ideology and Territory’, p. 24.

²² Smith, *Ethnic Origins*, p. 28.

²³ Eric Kaufmann and Oliver Zimmer, ‘In Search of the Authentic Nation: Landscape and National Identity in Canada and Switzerland’, *Nations and Nationalism*, 4.4 (1998), 483-510 (p. 485). See also Hooson, ‘Introduction’, Grosby, ‘Territoriality’ and Connor, ‘Homelands’.

²⁴ Oliver Zimmer, ‘In Search of Natural Identity: Alpine Landscape and the Reconstruction of the Swiss Nation’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 40.4 (1998), 637-65 (641).

²⁵ See for instance Tim Edensor, *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2002), p. 53 and Pyrs Gruffudd, ‘Landscape and Nationhood: Tradition and Modernity in Rural Wales 1900-1950’ (Unpublished PhD thesis, Loughborough University, 1989), p. 177.

revelations, oaths, shrines, migrations and so on – associated with a given community, and in subsequent lore have become an indispensable part of the shared memories and mythology of that community’.²⁶ In addition they have become historicised and ‘become actors in the reconstruction of the past which nationalist intellectuals elaborate’ and may become part of the nationalist hagiography.²⁷ With regard to national homeland, Williams and Smith use as a starting point the evocative assertion that, ‘its mountains are sacred, its rivers are full of memories, its lakes recall distant oaths and battles’.²⁸ In later works, Smith develops on this in relation to ethnoscares and the fervent attachment of populations to their territory which, he argues, become invested with powerful connotations and cultural meanings:

What is at stake is the idea of an historic and poetic landscape, one imbued with the culture and history of a group, and vice versa, a group part of whose character is felt by themselves and outsiders to derive from the particular landscape they inhabit and commemorated as such in verse and song.²⁹

Here Smith highlights a number of aspects that will be examined in more detail in relation to Aragon. These are the belief that national character is to some extent determined by physical environment, and the celebration of certain elements of a community’s natural environment in verse and song. With regard to the influence of Aragon’s physical environment on the character of its people Aragonese historian Carlos Serrano argues that ‘in Aragon, land of dry non-irrigated areas, an iconography has been created that is related to the dryness, the harshness of the soil and ruggedness of the land, which has extended – from a determinism that has little to do with science – to the character of its peoples’.³⁰ Smith’s reference to a particular landscape inhabited by a people being represented in verse and song is also eminently applicable to Aragon where the harshness of the land as a result of drought and the ‘life-giving’ properties of the Ebro are prominent features in Aragonese popular music. Music and emblematic songs also have a prominent place at demonstrations and events held in defence of the Ebro against proposed water transfers, and therefore form an integral part of the study.

²⁶ Williams and Smith, ‘National Construction’, p. 509.

²⁷ Smith, *Ethnic Origins*, p. 185.

²⁸ Williams and Smith, ‘National Construction’, p. 509.

²⁹ Smith, *Myths and Memories*, p. 150.

³⁰ Serrano, ‘El aragonesismo costista’, p. 12.

Smith's exploration of the 'territorialization of memory' is also significant to the study of the importance of landscape features in Aragonese nationalism. In his analysis, the land is seen as 'a historically unique and poetic landscape, as a decisive influence over historical events and as a witness to ethnic survival and commemoration over the *longue durée*.'³¹ These are all components of a general process of 'territorialization of memory', which bring about a close association between a landscape and a particular community with the result that a people is believed to belong to a specific territory and a territory to a particular people. The poetic landscape is revered as an 'ancestral homeland' and the 'ethnoscape' becomes an intrinsic part of the character, history and destiny of the culture community, to be commemorated regularly and defended at all costs lest the 'personality' of the ethnic or regional community be impugned. These aspects, in particular the defence of territory against despoliation and exploitation and the commemoration of the landscape in popular music, are highly significant in relation to Aragonese nationalism. The praise and commemoration of natural features of the territory is, according to Smith, another example of 'the process by which nature becomes historicised and its features celebrated; at the same time the community and its history become naturalized, and its development comes to be seen as part of the natural order.'³² The idea that certain geographical features are connected with nationhood and the concept of the conjoining of landscape and nation are considered in depth by Eric Kaufmann and Oliver Zimmer in relation to Canada and Switzerland.³³

In contrast to Smith's ethno-symbolist linkage of territory with memory, Steven Grosby put forward a primordialist interpretation of the life-giving and life-sustaining aspect of territory: 'the puzzle of territoriality is the attribution of a primordial, life-giving and life sustaining significance to an environment which is considerably more extensive than that recognised by the relatively more limited actions of the family.'³⁴ This close association between a specific land and a

³¹ Smith, *Myths and Memories*, p. 151.

³² Smith, *Myths and Memories*, p. 151.

³³ See Zimmer, 'In Search of Natural Identity', pp. 637-65 (p. 644) and Kaufmann and Zimmer, 'In Search of the Authentic Nation', pp. 483-510.

³⁴ Grosby, 'Territoriality', p. 150.

particular people, he argues, can be traced back to the Sumerians and Egyptians and as Guibernau and Hutchinson point out, 'it has a quasi-primordial character, as territoriality with its life-sustaining qualities becomes constitutive of collective identity.'³⁵ The life-giving and life-sustaining aspect of a natural element is an aspect that will be explored in depth in relation to Aragon's early nationalist group in Barcelona which viewed the Ebro in an organic, primordial way as a life-giver and the PAR conception of the Ebro and water as life.

Treatment of symbols by theorists of nations and nationalism

Hobsbawm, Breuilly and Smith have drawn attention to the use made of symbols and ceremonies by nationalist movements, together with their importance in creating a sense of national consciousness and identity. However, when Hobsbawm and Breuilly refer to symbols it is unclear whether this includes natural symbols such as the Ebro or whether they are referring to something quite different, although Smith's references to mountains, rivers and lakes would imply that he does. In addition, one must also consider whether symbols are of primary or secondary importance in their works. Smith's thinking on symbolic elements is as follows:

Of symbolic elements, the most important for ethnic and national formations are myths of ethnic origin and ethnic election, traditions of homeland attachment, myth-memory of golden ages, and myths of heroic sacrifice.³⁶

As a leading proponent of the modernist stance, Hobsbawm gives no credence to ethnicity as a causal factor in the emergence of nations and national identities. Instead he stresses the political nature of nationalism and the invented nature of national identity and traditions. Thus, rather than looking for the origin of symbols in nature or the past, he maintains that national symbols are invented for political purposes and emphasises the importance of nationalist elites in this process.³⁷ According to Hobsbawm:

³⁵ Montserrat Guibernau and John Hutchinson, Introduction, in Guibernau and Hutchinson, *Understanding Nationalism*, pp. 1-31 (p. 17).

³⁶ Smith, 'History and National Destiny', p. 197.

³⁷ Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism*, p. 77.

Most of the occasions when people become conscious of citizenship as such remain associated with symbols and semi-ritual practices (for instance, elections), most of which are historically novel and largely invented: flags, images, ceremonies and music.³⁸

It is evident that the symbols to which he refers are 'new', manufactured symbols such as flags and anthems, rather than natural symbols. This raises the question of whether his argument holds true in relation to natural symbols such as the Ebro. I will argue that in Aragon the Ebro and anti transfer demonstrations have become intimately associated with occasions when people become conscious of their citizenship and national identity. Moreover, in recent years demonstrations in opposition to the proposed transfer of water have shown how this natural symbol has become even more emblematic when linked with other powerful symbols of *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism. These include the Virgin of Pilar, Joaquin Costa, San Jorge, the Aragonese flag and emblematic popular songs and 'hymns' with many being held on occasions which have an overwhelming nation-building significance in Aragon, such as the Día de Aragón and the Fiestas de Pilar. In addition, it is possible to see in these occasions, and the symbols that have become intimately associated with them, many of the aspects alluded to by theorists such as Hobsbawm, Breuilly and Smith in relation to their role in raising national consciousness and reinforcing collective identity.

Hobsbawm concedes that where feelings of collective belonging did already exist, which he terms proto-nationalism, this 'made the task of nationalism easier, however great the differences between the two, insofar as existing symbols and sentiments of proto-national community could be mobilized behind a modern cause or a modern state.' Whilst he acknowledges that popular national symbolism can have a role in the making of nations this aspect is of secondary importance to the main thrust of his argument, which epitomises the concept of the 'invention of tradition' and the importance of nationalist elites.³⁹

Arguing from an ethno-symbolist stance Smith maintains that modern nations are created out of pre-modern myths, memories and symbols, although he does not give

³⁸ Eric Hobsbawm, 'Introduction: Inventing Traditions', in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 1-14, p. 12.

³⁹ Hobsbawm, 'Inventing Traditions', p. 10.

specific examples of what these symbols are. The implication is they are events, places and monuments associated with the ethnic history of a community. For instance ‘modern nationalism can be seen in part as deriving from powerful, external and premodern traditions, symbols and myths which are taken up and recast in the nationalist ideologies of national mission and destiny.’⁴⁰

With regard to natural features, which I would argue can, in certain cases, be accorded symbolic status, he argues that they ‘can delimit and locate a community in the landscape by recalling symbolic crises, dramatic events, or turning points in the history of the community.’⁴¹ With Colin Williams, he maintains that the identity of a nation is bound up with memory and this memory is rooted in a homeland evoking the symbolism of its natural features such as mountains, rivers and lakes being full of memories and associated with countless battles and legends.⁴² In relation to nations, which are constructed around an ancient ethnic core, Smith argues: ‘both “history” and “landscape” become essential vehicles and moulds for nation-building. But their greatest influence is indirect: through the myths and symbols which they evoke.’⁴³

As we have seen in a number of his works Smith specifically focuses on natural features such as mountains, rivers and lakes. However, they are not necessarily subjects or symbols in themselves but vehicles for memories, as in the first of the above quotations, the scene of historical events associated with a particular community and ‘become an indispensable part of the shared memories and mythology of that community’.⁴⁴ Alternatively, they become historicised as ‘actors in the reconstruction of the past which nationalist intellectuals elaborate’.⁴⁵ For ethno-symbolists symbols of territory and community are, therefore, a key component of ethnicity and as Guibernau points out ‘the myths, symbols, traditions, heroes and holy places studied by ethnosymbolism are key components of any nationalist doctrine.’⁴⁶

⁴⁰ Anthony D. Smith, ‘Ethnic Election and National Destiny: Some religious Origins of Nationalist Ideals’, *Nations and Nationalism*, 5.3 (1999), 331-55, (p. 332).

⁴¹ Smith, *Ethnic Origins*, p.188.

⁴² Williams and Smith, ‘National Construction’, p. 509.

⁴³ Smith, *Ethnic Origin*, p. 200.

⁴⁴ Smith, *Myths and Memories*, p. 269.

⁴⁵ Smith, *Ethnic Origin*, p. 185.

⁴⁶ Montserrat Guibernau, ‘Anthony D. Smith on Nations and National Identity: A Critical Assessment’, *Nations and Nationalism*, 10.1/2 (2004), 125-141 (p. 127).

In Smith's works it is possible, therefore, to see symbols as being bound up with history, memory, the geography of the homeland and a sense of continuity or permanence, whilst constantly being recast and reinvented by nationalists through a variety of media. His approach attempts to balance the influence of the ethnic past and the impact of nationalist activity and do justice to both the created and received elements of national identity.⁴⁷ Breuilly refers to the use which nationalist and other mass movements make of symbols and ceremonies:

Nationalist movements like all mass movements make use of symbols and ceremonies. These give nationalist ideas a definite shape and force, both by projecting certain images and by enabling people to come together in ways which seem directly to express the solidarity of the nation.⁴⁸

However, Smith rightly contends that the popular resonance of symbols and ceremonies and the more subjective aspects of nationalism 'sit uneasily' with Breuilly's modernist, state-orientated. Smith draws attention to the fact that Breuilly addresses the more subjective aspects of nationalism and the problem of its widespread appeal only once in the whole of his book, although he concedes that is understandable given the book is devoted to the modern political nature and basis of nationalism.⁴⁹

Contributions from other disciplines to theoretical aspects

i. The power of symbols

In addition to consideration of symbols by theorists of nationalism anthropology and political science have also made an important contribution to our understanding of the cultural and political significance of symbols. According to Abner Cohen we 'see' groups through their symbols.⁵⁰ This observation is important in relation to the Ebro. Its portrayal as a symbol of territory and a referent of identity in a wide range

⁴⁷ Smith, 'Gastronomy or Geology', p. 19.

⁴⁸ Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*, p. 164.

⁴⁹ Anthony D. Smith, 'Nations and History', in Guibernau and Hutchinson, *Understanding Nationalism*, pp. 9-31, (p. 11).

⁵⁰ Abner Cohen, *Two Dimensional Man* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), p. 30.

of media, ranging from political statements and articles in the press to popular music and literature has created an image in which Aragonese identity and the Ebro have become firmly interlinked. This image has been transmitted throughout Spain particularly as a result of controversies surrounding proposals to transfer water from the Ebro to other regions on a number of occasions since the 1970s.⁵¹

In Cohen's definition symbols are 'normative forms that stand ambiguously for a multiplicity of meanings, evoke emotions and sentiments, and impel men to action.'⁵² Symbols are not only a means of promoting images and ideas but also an important factor in social action and mobilisation. Thus, on one level symbols have a strong emotional impact on people, stirring up feelings and rallying them around a particular issue. On another level, symbols are involved in politics in a wide variety of ways ranging from ritual, mass persuasion and stirring up emotions and sentiments to the provision of legitimacy where creating a symbol or, more commonly, identifying oneself with a popular symbol can be a potent means of gaining and keeping power.⁵³ The defence of the Ebro against 'outside' incursion by regionalist and nationalist parties as well as state parties provides an ideal opportunity for this. Ioan Lewis, who points out that 'symbols and sentiments feed upon each other and their fruitful interplay lies at the heart of social behaviour', adds a further dimension to the interplay of symbols and sentiments.⁵⁴

Drawing on the work of anthropologist Mary Douglas, Margaret Sleeboom suggests that symbols rather than being carriers of magic are the triggers of effects, and what makes them powerful is not so much belief in the symbols themselves but belief in the effectiveness of their mobilisation.⁵⁵ Sleeboom argues that it is only when symbols gain meaning as effective triggers of associated sentiments in linked

⁵¹ The following is an example from an article in the national press. 'La inmensa mayoría de los aragoneses ve el trasvase del río, como un ataque a su identidad y su patrimonio', *El Mundo*, 9 March, 2001, < <http://www.elmundo.es/2001/03/09/espana/965789.html>>.

⁵² Abner Cohen, 'Symbolic Action and the Structure of the Self', in *Symbols and Sentiments*, ed. by Ioan M. Lewis (London: Academic, 1977), pp. 117-28, (p. 117).

⁵³ Nieburg quoted in Kertzer, *Politics and Power*, p. 5.

⁵⁴ Lewis, *Symbols and Sentiments*, p. 2.

⁵⁵ Margaret Sleeboom, 'The Power of National Symbols: The Credibility of a Dragon's Efficacy', *Nations and Nationalism*, 8.3 (2002), 299-313 (p. 302). See also Douglas, *How Institutions Think*, pp. 21-30.

contexts, including that of daily life, that they become powerful.⁵⁶ In relation to the Ebro the many demonstrations against proposed water transfers, with up to a third of the population taking part at any one time, have demonstrated the power this symbol has in mobilising the people of Aragon and stirring up patriotic sentiments. In addition, the links with other powerful symbols and ceremonies, and the opportunities afforded for speeches, newspaper articles, rallies and popular songs by the ever-present controversies surrounding water transfer, have meant that the Ebro has maintained a high profile in politics and daily life in Aragon since the 1970s and therefore in Aragonese consciousness.

Douglas holds that symbols are powerful instruments of mass persuasion, and highly charged symbols, which people collectively identify with a nation can be manipulated for political purposes.⁵⁷ In political science there has been increasing interest in the study of symbols that hold political meaning, together with how they enter into politics, and how political actors consciously and unconsciously manipulate them.⁵⁸ In this context David Kertzer contends that ‘every culture has its own store of powerful symbols, and it is generally in the interest of new political forces to claim these symbols as their own.’⁵⁹ In the case of Aragon, just as the Ebro had been a symbol of the early nationalist formation in Barcelona, its defence and symbolic evocations were once again taken up by the regionalist/nationalist parties that emerged in the post-Franco period. However, the fact that the state parties in Aragon, such as the PSOE and PP, also champion it when they are opposing the National Water Plans put forward by their opponents, means that its use does not fall exclusively within the domain of Aragon’s regionalist and nationalist parties.

ii. Natural features as symbols of territory and group identity

Whilst Hobsbawm’s treatment of symbols is predominantly related to ‘new’ symbols geographers such as James Anderson, Pyrs Gruffudd, Colin Williams, Denis

⁵⁶ Sleeboom, pp. 299 and 309.

⁵⁷ Douglas, *Natural Symbols*.

⁵⁸ See for instance Abner Cohen, ‘Political Symbolism’, *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 8 (1979), 87-113 and Kertzer, *Ritual, Politics and Power*, pp. 2-8.

⁵⁹ Kertzer, *Ritual, Politics and Power*, pp. 42-43.

Cosgrove and Steven Daniels have extended his analysis to the natural world.⁶⁰ According to Anderson nationalists find their unifying symbols and sense of belonging not only in the history but also the geography of their territory, 'in striving to establish the distinctiveness of their nation, nationalists generally make ideological use of whatever cultural, historical or geographical features they find in their territories...'.⁶¹

Thus territory is not only contextual but it is also a source of symbolic and resource power. In this respect Gruffudd's studies of landscape and nationhood in Wales reveal many similarities with the situation in Aragon.⁶² In both cases landscape features, namely rivers, are seen as iconographic symbols of group identity and politically contested resources. Gruffudd's studies show that in mid-twentieth century Wales, water became a focus of conflict as a result of proposals for large-scale hydroelectricity schemes to supply Liverpool and the Midlands.⁶³ The rivers and streams of Snowdonia were likened to the lifeblood of the Welsh nation and assumed a central and symbolic role in Welsh nationalism in this period, becoming potent symbols of identity as well as political grievance. This has many similarities with Aragon and proposals to transfer water from the Ebro to the East Coast regions of Spain. As Serrano has pointed out many keys to Aragonese identity come together in the water transfer issue both in the past and the present and everything surrounding the transfer of water from the Ebro symbolises 'the relationship of *lo aragonés* with water and with the defence of territory as a trait of Aragonese identity'.⁶⁴ In addition, Tim Edensor points out, landscape features become more

⁶⁰ James Anderson, 'Nationalism and Geography', in *The Rise of the Modern State* ed. James Anderson (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1986), pp. 115-42, Gruffudd, 'Landscape' and Prys Gruffudd, 'Uncivil Engineering': Nature, Nationalism and Hydro-electrics in North Wales', in *Water, Engineering and Landscape*, ed. Denis Cosgrove and Geoff Petts (London: Belhaven Press, 1990), pp. 159-173; Williams and Smith, 'National Construction'; Denis Cosgrove and Stephen Daniels (eds.), *The Iconography of Landscape* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) and Stephen Daniels, Introduction, *Fields of Vision: Landscape Imagery and National Identity in England and the United States* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993). In the Spanish context Jacobo García Álvarez has considered the role of geography in the construction of Galician national identity. See for instance 'The Geographical Construction of a Substate National Identity: The Galician Case in Spain, 1920-1936', *Nordia Geographical Publications*, 27.1, (1998), 38-58.

⁶¹ Anderson, 'Nationalism and Geography', p. 119.

⁶² Gruffudd, 'Landscape' and Gruffudd, 'Uncivil Engineering'.

⁶³ One of the principal themes of Plaid Cymru's early philosophy was the intimate relationship between a people and its land. See Gruffudd, 'Landscape', p. 160.

⁶⁴ Serrano, 'Aragón o la maldición', p. 13 and Serrano, 'Aragonesismo entre 1972 y 1982', p. 143.

expressly symbolic of the nation if they are perceived as being under threat.⁶⁵ This observation is corroborated by Aragon's opposition to proposals to transfer water from the Ebro to other regions of Spain at various points throughout the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.⁶⁶

In analyses of the role of landscape in the articulation of national identity in Switzerland and Canada, Eric Kaufmann and Oliver Zimmer draw attention to the conditions under which natural environments and features acquire significance in definitions of nationhood.⁶⁷ Zimmer coins the terms 'naturalization of the nation' and 'nationalization of nature' to describe two ways in which nationalists comprehend their landscape.⁶⁸ The former refers to the way in which a nation comes to view itself as the offspring of its natural environment and establishes a symbolic link between nations and their natural environment. The latter refers to the process whereby the nation creates a homeland by associating itself with a particular territory. Their discussion of the Romantic Movement, early romantic nationalists such as Rousseau, Herder and Fichter, civic and organic interpretations of nationhood and how particular landscapes have an emblematic role in the articulation of national identity is particularly relevant to the use of the Ebro by the early nationalist group. In addition, Zimmer's assertion that most European nations possess a 'crowd symbol', in the case of Switzerland, its Alpine landscape, around which popular feeling and national belonging can be generated and sustained is also applicable to Aragon and the Ebro in the context of anti transfer mobilisation.⁶⁹

iii. The iconography of landscape

Also significant to the study of the symbolism of the Ebro are studies by Denis Cosgrove, Steven Daniels, David Lowenthal and Brian Osbourne on the iconography of landscape (and by extension specific features of the landscape) and its power as an

⁶⁵ Edensor, p. 53.

⁶⁶ These include opposition to the 1970s proposal to transfer water to Barcelona, the PSOE proposal contained in the 1993 PHN and the PP proposal put forward in the 2000 PHN.

⁶⁷ Eric Kaufmann, 'Naturalizing the Nation': The Rise of Naturalistic Nationalism in the United States and Canada', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 40.4 (1998), 666-95; Kaufmann and Zimmer, 'In Search of the Authentic Nation', 483-510.

⁶⁸ Oliver Zimmer, 'Forging the Swiss Nation, 1760-1939. Popular Memory, Patriotic Invention, and Competing Conceptions of Nationhood' (Unpublished doctoral thesis, LSE, University of London, 1999), p. 289.

⁶⁹ Zimmer, 'In Search of Natural Identity', p. 637.

idiom for representing national identity.⁷⁰ For Lowenthal ‘every nation has landscapes felt to characterise the country or to symbolize its culture. Attachment to specific localities hallowed by history or folk memory evokes patriotic feeling and fosters national identity’.⁷¹ Examples of such landscapes could include the association of Argentina with images of the pampas and gauchos, the association of the Netherlands with drainage ditches and polders reclaimed from the sea, Switzerland and its alpine landscape, Canada and its natural ‘wilderness’ landscape, Denmark with its Jutland Heath and, not least, Aragon and the Ebro: ‘Aragon is defined by the Ebro’.⁷²

In cultural geography, landscape imagery has long been viewed as an integral component of national identity. Daniels illustrates how landscapes in various media have articulated national identities in England and the USA from the late eighteenth century and mentions European rivers with nationalist associations such as the Thames, Seine and Rhine and, in the US, the Hudson.⁷³ Thus, it could be argued that the imagery associated with the Ebro gives both visual and symbolic form to a sense of cultural, political and economic community in Aragon where symbolic identity and economic prosperity come together in the form of this powerful symbol. Additionally, Osbourne’s study of the importance of the St. Lawrence River in the national iconography of Canada argues that rivers lend themselves to narrative and emotional symbolism and become metaphors for national development and national character.⁷⁴ However, in spite of its important role in national iconography the St. Lawrence has not gained the degree of prominence that one would expect. This is particularly interesting as it will be argued the Ebro has not reached its full potential as an iconographic symbol of Aragon, albeit for a different set of reasons. This aspect is considered in Chapter 8.

⁷⁰ See for instance Cosgrove and Daniels, *Iconography of Landscape*, Introduction, Daniels, *Fields of Vision*, David Lowenthal, ‘Finding Valued Landscapes’, *Progress in Human Geography*, 2 (1978), 375-418 (p. 409) and Brian Osbourne, ‘A Canadian “Riverscape”, National “Inscape” The St-Lawrence in the Canadian National Imagination’, *Études Canadiennes*, 50 (2001), 257-275.

⁷¹ Lowenthal, ‘Finding Valued Landscapes’, p. 409.

⁷² Rolde de Estudios Aragoneses, <http://www.rolde-ceddar.net/rolde/his1.html> [accessed 7 December 2003]. It is acknowledged that all Aragonese do not necessarily hold this view and that the water issue has at times been a source of conflict between the mountain and lowland areas of Aragon. However, it is an image that has gained considerable currency in recent years possibly as a result of media coverage of the water transfer controversy.

⁷³ Daniels, *Fields of Vision*, p. 147.

⁷⁴ Osbourne, ‘Canadian “Riverscape”, p. 258.

With specific reference to rivers there are various examples that have become associated with nationhood and have been accorded a symbolic national status. For instance the Thames has been seen as an embodiment of British liberty and national identity. According to T. L. Peacock's nineteenth century poem *The Genius of the Thames: a Lyrical Poem in Two Parts* British identity will cease only with the death of the river.⁷⁵ Artistic images of the Thames often show the commercial activity of the river beneath the national icons of St Paul's or Westminster.⁷⁶ Similarly, written and pictorial images of the Ebro also incorporate the powerful combination of this symbol and that of the Basílica del Pilar.⁷⁷ Another example of a river associated with nationhood is the River Po, which became the symbol of the Lega Nord in Italy. The name of the provisional republic and the party's newspaper, Padania, derived from Padus, the Latin name for the river. The German Rhine is also charged with symbolic meaning and was transformed by nationalist thinkers such as Ernst Moritz Arndt, Johann Gottlieb Fichte and Gottfried Herder and the Romantic Movement into Germany's quintessential river. In his study of landscape imagery in the construction of German national identity, Thomas Lekan points out that although cultural historians often regarded the forest as the quintessential symbol of German identity many Romantics regarded the Rhine as the lifeblood of German culture.⁷⁸ The Rhine as the mythical origin of the nation was popularised in nineteenth century literature, music, poetry and collections of tales and stories with well-known examples of these including Richard Wagner's *Das Rheingold* (1876) and Max Schneckenburger's *Die Wacht an Rhein* (1840).⁷⁹ The symbolic importance of the Rhine also found expression in Germany's landscape preservation movements in the period from the 1880s to 1945 and in geopolitics, which flourished in the Weimar republic, and linked the historical evolution and political development of nations to their environmental conditions. In the geopolitical view, features of landscape, such

⁷⁵ Quoted in Geoffrey Cubitt, *Imagining Nations* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), p. 141.

⁷⁶ Cubitt, p. 141.

⁷⁷ This is summed up by Andrés Ferrando in 'No sólo se canta la Jota en Aragón', *Renacimiento Aragonés*, No. 11, 15 March 1936, p. 3, 'the temple of Pilar was contemplated with serene majesty in the mirrors afforded to by the Ebro'.

⁷⁸ See Thomas M. Lekan, *Imagining the Nation in Nature: Landscape Preservation and German Identity, 1885-1945* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2004), p. 27.

⁷⁹ For further examples see Lekan, p. 27.

as mountains, rivers and plains, were not merely a passive setting for the unfolding of human agency but worked actively as ‘sculptors’ of people.⁸⁰

iv. Concepts of organic nationalism and environmental determinism

Environmental and geographic determinism are closely linked to Romantic and Herderian concepts of organic nationalism and the idea of an affinity between the people of an area and its environment. The Romantic Movement was a product of the latter part of the eighteenth century and is seen as a reaction to the universalistic thought of the Enlightenment and modernisation.⁸¹ Its vision of nations as ‘primordial, organic outgrowths of nature’, as Kaufmann puts it, contrasted sharply with the French Enlightenment view of nationhood as a product of written constitutions and abstract natural rights.⁸² Nature occupied an important place in the work of early romantic nationalists such as Rousseau (1712-78), Herder (1744-1803) and Fichter (1762 –1814) who attempted to show that there was a link between natural environment and ‘national character’. Since each nation’s homeland had distinctive characteristics this gave the community its individuality. According to Herder the physical diversity of nature had created the cultural diversity of mankind. Equally the land worked by a particular national community was an expression of that people and its history.

The implications of this concept went beyond the realm of philosophical ideas as it was rapidly embraced by nationalist movements throughout Europe and North America. In Europe German identity was associated with the Rhine and Swiss identity with the Alps and in North America both Canada and the USA made wild natural landscapes central elements of their national identity. Kaufmann and Zimmer’s analyses of the role of landscape in the articulation of national identity in Switzerland, Canada and the USA provide excellent studies of how natural environments and natural features acquire significance in definitions of nationhood.⁸³

⁸⁰ Lekan, p. 116.

⁸¹ Kaufmann, ‘Naturalizing the Nation’, p. 666.

⁸² Kaufmann, ‘Naturalizing the Nation’, p. 666. See also Lekan, pp. 2-6 and John Hutchinson, ‘Myth against Myth: The Nation as Ethnic Overlay’, *Nations and Nationalism*, 10.1/2 (2004), 109-23, (pp. 110-13).

⁸³ See Kaufmann, ‘Naturalizing the Nation’ and Kaufmann and Zimmer, ‘In Search of the Authentic Nation’.

Whilst the naturalistic nationalism of the Romantic movement may have lost favour as an ideological discourse in the later part of the twentieth century it is still part of the popular imagination and finds expression in literature, the media, songs and poetry. Moreover symbolic landscapes and natural features continue to play a part in the creation of a national image of a particular country or territory.

v. Environmental protection and identity

Efforts by environmentalists and nationalists to protect their environment, it is argued, are not just an attempt to preserve the ecology of a particular area but also a nationalist project to ensure continuity of a landscape deemed to be representative of the national spirit.⁸⁴ What is more, environmentalism can play an important part in the creation and preservation of identity. Highlighting man's psychological connection with the natural world Jonathan Olsen holds 'environmentalism has as much to do with protecting a piece of ourselves, a sense of our identity, as it does with protecting forests, rivers and lakes.'⁸⁵ He argues that the physical threat to a particular place is expressed as a psychological threat as well, a piece of identity under attack, and in such circumstances tangible symbols attain crucial significance. Although Olsen's study is of radical right-wing European political groups there are many interesting observations on environmentalism which could be equally applicable to left-wing nationalism, such as Aragon's CHA. These include the role of environmentalism in identity creation and preservation, man's attachment to a particular natural environment, his desire to protect that homeland and the harnessing of environmental concerns to nationalist politics.

Thomas Lekan's analysis of landscape imagery in the construction of German national identity shows how the concerns of the German landscape preservation movements, which first emerged in the 1880s, whilst not 'ecological' in the modern sense interpreted environmental destruction through a nationalist lens, arguing that nature's aesthetic disfigurement would erode Germany's distinctive character,

⁸⁴ See for instance David Lowenthal, 'European and English Landscapes as National Symbols' in *Geography and National Identity*, ed. by David Hooson (Cambridge, Mass. and Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), pp. 15-38 and Guntrun Herb, 'National Identity and Territory', in *Nested Identities: Nationalism, Territory and Scale*, ed. by Guntrun Herb and D. Kaplan (Lanham: Roman-Littlefield, 1999), pp. 9-30.

⁸⁵ Olsen, p. 5.

destroy the balance of nature within its borders and ultimately lead to the population's moral decline.⁸⁶

Daniel Deudney and Colin Williams analyse the relationship between traditional nationalism and modern environmentalism. Deudney argues that a sense of national identity is constructed not only around fellow members of the national community and its shared history, traditions and political institutions, but also around a 'feeling of connectedness to a particular place or area', a 'here-feeling'. Here the nation is seen as a product of nature where environmental degradation and national decline go hand in hand resulting in political mobilisation around environmental issues.⁸⁷

In his article 'The communal defence of threatened environments and identities' Williams analyses the relationship between environmentalism and nationalism.⁸⁸ He argues that active co-operation between the respective movements arises out of a shared concern with the defence of valued environments, heritage protection and environmental stewardship, even though their ideological rationale may be quite different, and a common focus on the state as the central agency of 'structured oppression'. From a nationalist standpoint environmental despoliation is seen as destroying the mythical connection between land and people. Environmental degradation and national decline go hand in hand.⁸⁹ David Hooson also observes that nationalist movements have frequently been ignited by 'a perceived despoliation of the natural environment of their beloved homeland'.⁹⁰ His example is the former USSR where devastated natural environments have exacerbated suppressed national feelings. Such an argument could also be applied in relation to Aragon where heritage protection and environmental stewardship are becoming increasingly important in the left-wing nationalist discourse where the CHA has been closely involved in the setting up of the environmental group *Plataforma en Defensa del Ebro*, is a fervent supporter of the New Water Culture and maintains close links with

⁸⁶ See Lekan, p. 4.

⁸⁷ See Deudney, pp. 130-31.

⁸⁸ Williams, 'Communal Defence', pp. 105-120.

⁸⁹ According to Ernst Moritz Arndt, one of the fathers of modern German nationalism, 'the axe that is laid on the tree frequently becomes an axe that is laid on the entire nation'. Cited by Olsen, p. 61.

⁹⁰ Hooson, p.i.

associations opposed to the construction of large reservoirs in the Pyrenees such as Coordinadora de Afectados por Grandes Embalses y Trasmases (COGARET).

vi. Economic arguments

Michael Hechter and Tom Nairn are amongst the few theorists who have considered the economic aspect in relation to minority, sub-state movements.⁹¹ Their theories have focused on arguments relating to core-periphery interactions and Marxist-based ‘uneven development’ and ‘internal colonialism’ arguments. According to ‘uneven development theory’ nationalism is a response to the uneven development of capitalism and industrialisation. ‘Internal colonialism’ suggests that as well as incorporating overseas colonies the expanding states of Western Europe also incorporated internal colonies or ethnic enclaves within their boundaries. For Nairn this provided a basis for a general theory of nationalism and for Hechter offered the basis for a general theory in relation to the emergence of different ethnic identities within developing societies. As Gruffudd points out, Hechter’s theory of ‘uneven development’ places the economy at the heart of the debate in that it sees nationalism as cultural resurgence in the face of relative economic disadvantage.⁹²

These theories, however, have a number of weaknesses and would appear to be flawed as a basis for a general theory of nationalism. They have been criticised by Smith, amongst others, for failing to take account of political, cultural and ethnic factors.⁹³ As a result of the criticism received the internal colonialism thesis has been partly revised.⁹⁴ The fact that the uneven development thesis has been severely criticised as a general theory does not mean that one should not make reference to the presence or absence of relative economic development to account for the mobilisation of a particular nationalist movement. However, as Orridge and Williams

⁹¹ Hechter, *Internal Colonialism* and Nairn, *The Break-up of Britain*.

⁹² Gruffudd, ‘Landscape’, p. 154.

⁹³ See for instance Smith, ‘Nationalism, Ethnic Separatism’, pp. 20-34.

⁹⁴ Michael Hechter and M. Levi, ‘The Comparative Analysis of Ethno-Regional Movements’, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 2 (1979), 260-74.

point out, it is insufficient to quote uneven capitalist development as a universal prime determinant of this.⁹⁵

In spite of the criticisms raised, these works and the concepts on which they focus are still worth consideration in the context of this investigation as the 'reactive side' of Aragonese nationalism focuses on the 'uneven development' of interior regions, like itself, in favour of the more prosperous coastal regions. Since the 1970s, the 'reactive side' of Aragonese nationalism has been fuelled by state attempts to transfer 'Aragonese' water resources to the richer more developed coastal areas when Aragon itself is unable to make full use of its resources due to an historic lack of central government investment in the necessary infrastructures. The Spanish situation is the reverse of Hechter's model in which it is the peripheral areas that suffer the 'uneven development' rather than the interior areas. However, whilst Aragon is geographically an interior region it is peripheral in comparison to Madrid as the centre of state power.

Smith asserts that the 'internal colonialism' model:

Is used by ethnic nationalists to bolster the autonomist case by pointing to such consequences as governmental neglect, central exploitation of the periphery's resources, unequal and one-sided exchanges of goods, the emigration of various skills and manpower, transport and communication systems that favour the centre...⁹⁶

This description is eminently applicable to Aragon, where identical grievances surfaced in opposition to central government proposals to transfer water from the Ebro to the east coast regions of Catalonia, Valencia and Murcia, contained in the PHNs of 1993 and 2000.

Paul Brass also argues that the formation of nations in developed societies highlights the fact that inequalities in the way in which regions are treated by states, or simply

⁹⁵ See Andrew W. Orridge and Colin H. Williams, 'Autonomist Nationalism: A Theoretical Framework for Spatial Variations in its Genesis and Development', *Political Geography Quarterly*, 1 (1982), 19-39 (pp. 34-35).

⁹⁶ Smith, *Ethnic Origins*, p. 163.

the perception of unequal treatment, favours the ‘nationalisation’ of urban masses.⁹⁷ This argument shares common ground with the ‘uneven development’ and ‘internal colonialism’ theories of Hechter and Nairn and with theories that point to the creation of a sense of grievance, injustice or victimisation as a means of maintaining nationalist momentum. In addition, Jordi Solé-Tura argues that all nationalisms create outside adversaries in order to maintain political initiative in their own territory.⁹⁸ Clearly, an analysis of the use of arguments such as these in the opposition to the transfer of water from the Ebro will be part of this study. In addition, Brass puts forward the argument that in modern societies mobilisation as a result of resources and lost opportunities can convert communities into nationalities.⁹⁹ This aspect is taken up in relation to Aragon by Guillén Pardos who points out that its application to the Aragonese demonstrations of the 1990s and 2000 would suggest that Aragonese society has been able to ‘nationalise itself’ through issues such as autonomy and water.¹⁰⁰ An interesting question, not addressed by theorists, is whether autonomist movements are more likely to be successful if their fundamental rationale is economic development rather than ethnic group/cultural preservation.

Also related to the centre-periphery dialectic and looking specifically at Spain, Artemio Baigorri puts forward the argument that from the end of the 1950s to the mid 1970s the Spanish state acted in the manner of a ‘predator state’ in so far as environmental management was concerned.¹⁰¹ This was also the case in many other industrialised European countries, however, the lack of democracy in Spain at this time further exacerbated the situation. As Baigorri points out the peripheries became ‘zones of extraction’ of resources and ‘supports for the metabolism of development’ with the state subjugating local environmental management systems to the Spanish ‘national interest’. This was certainly true in Aragon. Arguments related to a ‘predator state’ which uses certain regions as ‘zones of extraction of resources’ are

⁹⁷ Paul R. Brass, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Theory and Comparison* (New Delhi and Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1991), p. 41-42.

⁹⁸ Jordi Solé-Tura, *Nacionalidades y nacionalismos en España* (Madrid: Alianza, 1985), p. 169.

⁹⁹ Brass, ‘La formación de las naciones’, p. 70-71.

¹⁰⁰ Guillén Pardos, *Aragón, comunidad imaginada*, p. 27.

¹⁰¹ Artemio Baigorri, ‘From Predator State to Sustainable Region: The Effects of Political and Administrative Decentralization on the Environment in Spain’, pp. 1-20, <<http://www.unex.es/web/sociology/BAIGORRI/papers/paperchicago.pdf>> [accessed 6/05/07].

particularly pertinent to arguments put forward in the *aragonesista* newspaper *Andalán* in the 1970s and analysed in Chapter 5.

vii. Theoretical consideration of sub-state minority nationalism

Williams examines three approaches to minority nationalism: the diffusionist perspective, the core-periphery perspective and the conflict perspective.¹⁰² As he points out, nation-state orientated theories do not consider nationalism as a response to a particular set of circumstances or grievances which it could be argued is, more often than not, the case in relation to minority nationalisms. Geographers such as Williams, Agnew and McLaughlen address minority nationalism as a response to a particular set of circumstances.¹⁰³ This is particularly relevant in relation to Aragon where the Ebro has consistently been regarded as a political grievance factor which, whenever threatened with proposed water transfers to other regions, has readily inspired mass mobilisation. Williams also argues that resistance, struggle and the politics of collective defence of land, territory and natural resources dominate the relationship between a minority movement and its incursive, hegemonic state power. Such a relationship is evident between Aragon and the Spanish state.

In his discussion of territorial separatism Williams argues that a perception of an unfulfilled resource potential can be a powerful mobilising influence in the development of a sub-state and, on occasions, separatist movement especially if it becomes linked with regional distinctiveness and a feeling of exploitation.¹⁰⁴ In sub-state nationalism there is frequently evidence of economic inequality in which the minority has received a less than proportionate share of wealth and power. Whilst this argument is frequently taken up in Aragon, the same could also be argued by some of the other Spanish sub-state nationalisms.

Williams' analysis of the wider issue of political autonomy in Wales and Quebec raises many points that are also true of the Aragonese case.¹⁰⁵ Firstly, in the vein of

¹⁰² Colin H. Williams, 'When Nationalists Challenge: When Nationalists Rule', *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 3 (1985), 27-48 (pp. 28-30).

¹⁰³ Williams, 'Communal Defence', p. 109.

¹⁰⁴ Williams, Introduction, *National Separatism*, p. 2.

¹⁰⁵ Williams, 'When Nationalists Challenge'.

core-periphery analysis and Hechter's work on 'internal colonialism', if the ethnic intelligentsia is ever to escape from its dependency situation, it must advocate nationalist goals as a reactive assertion of peripheral consciousness. This is pertinent in relation to the use of the water controversy to fuel the 'reactive side' of Aragonese nationalism. Secondly, Williams' argument that minority nationalism does not develop primarily as a means of cultural defence but as an instrument for articulating opposition to the marginalisation in the economic system of the community and its awareness of its dependency situation, also has clear parallels in the Aragonese case. Thirdly, he argues that minority nationalism 'is spawned by an awareness of exploitation on the part of the collectivity, an awareness forced by exclusion from control of their means of production and mode of development: it focuses on alien control and domination by an 'outside power.'¹⁰⁶ This is also applicable to Aragonese nationalism. Finally, his conclusion that when the 'chips are down' the majority of the electorate revert to a pattern of support for the state based parties also has parallels.¹⁰⁷

viii. Regionalist and nationalist parties in Europe

In contrast to theories of nations and nationalism which consider the wider cultural and historical aspects of nationalist sentiments, political science affords a growing number of analyses of regionalist and nationalist parties in a Europe-wide context and, more recently, from a comparative perspective. With the emergence or re-emergence of regionalist parties throughout Europe from the 1960s onwards academic studies have focused on ethnic resurgence, centre-periphery theories¹⁰⁸ and issues related to party system change.¹⁰⁹ The presence of this type of party in regional and/or national Parliaments (re)introduced a territorial and centre-periphery aspect into politics. The 1970s and 1980s saw the emergence of Green and Left-libertarian regional parties and the 1980s and 1990s the emergence of anti-modernist

¹⁰⁶ Williams, 'When Nationalists Challenge', p. 38.

¹⁰⁷ Williams, 'When Nationalists Challenge', p. 39.

¹⁰⁸ See for instance Stein Rokkan and Derek W. Urwin, (eds.), *The Politics of Territorial Identity. Studies in European Regionalism* (London: Sage, 1982); Hechter and Levi, 'The comparative analysis', pp. 260-274.

¹⁰⁹ Arend Lijphart, 'Political Theories and the Explanation of Ethnic Conflict in the Western World', in *Ethnic Conflict in the Western World*, ed. by Milton J. Esman (Ithaca, New York: Free Press, 1977), pp. 46-64; Rokkan and Urwin, 'Politics of Territorial Identity', pp. 260-274.

radical right-wing parties with the New Left being overtaken by a radical right, nationalist, anti-immigrant agenda across Europe in the 2000s.

Interviews with Aragonese nationalist party leaders and analysis of documents on the CHA's environmental stance and attitudes towards the Ebro and water highlighted the need to relate CHA thinking to 'New Politics' and the 'New Left'. Chapter 7 considers how current CHA thinking forms part of a wider European trend and how this helps us to understand its rejection of more traditional nationalist and Romantic attitudes towards the natural assets of their territory. The Aragonese party PAR, on the other hand, whilst embracing some European thinking regarding the depuration of residual water and the transfer of water between river basins, has a territorial rather than international attitude to Aragon's natural resources.

Summary

When Smith contends that modern nations are created out of pre-modern myths, memories and symbols, which are taken up and recast by nationalists the Ebro would be a perfect case in point especially in the nationalism of the early Aragonese nationalist group in Barcelona. Also applicable are his and William's assertion that symbols of homeland such as mountains, rivers and lakes are bound up with history, memory and continuity. Breuilly's assertion that symbols project an image of the nation is also applicable to the Ebro which has consistently been portrayed as an important symbol of Aragon's past, present and future. His claim that symbols enable people to come together in ways that seem to express the solidarity of the nation is particularly significant in the context of the numerous anti-transfer demonstrations in Aragon. Hobsbawm's focus on 'new' symbols such as the flag and anthems is relevant in the coming together of these symbols and the symbolism of the Ebro in the anti-transfer demonstrations that have occurred since the 1970s. On a symbolic level Hobsbawm, Breuilly and Smith argue that symbols are fundamental to nationalism. In this respect the thesis will show how the Ebro has frequently been portrayed as a symbol of Aragonese homeland, a life-giver and father figure, a referent of identity and a symbol of Aragon's future. Moreover, its defence against outside encroachment has linked it with other important symbols of Aragon such as San Jorge, the Virgin of Pilar and Joaquín Costa and with ceremonial occasions such

as the Día de Aragón and the Fiestas de Pilar, which are of paramount importance in the nation-building process. Demonstrations against proposed water transfers have also linked it with the flag, the presence of which has been ubiquitous on these occasions, and also with emblematic popular music. This network of linkages and the Ebro's multi-faceted centrality to the Aragonese reality makes it a fascinating topic for investigation. However, as we will see this linkage with other symbols has detracted from its development as stand-alone symbol.

In addition to theorists of nations and nationalism a number of other disciplines contribute to the nationalism debate and the absence of in-depth consideration of natural features by the main theorists of nations and nationalism has been taken up by a number of these scholars. Their studies of the power of landscape iconography as an idiom for representing national identity and the relationship between natural features and identity reveal a number of parallels which will be drawn with the symbolism of the Ebro. Also, Osbourne's observation that in spite of its important role in national iconography the St. Lawrence did not gain the degree of prominence that one would expect is also applicable to the Ebro and will be shown in Chapter 8.

Studies by anthropologists and political scientists show that the power of symbols to evoke emotions, stir up feelings and mobilise people to action makes them a potent force in the political sphere and in popular mobilisation. The thesis will show that when perceived to be under threat the Ebro becomes more expressly symbolic of the nation. The many demonstrations against proposed water transfers, with up to a third of the population taking part at any one time, demonstrate the power that the Ebro has in relation to mobilising the people of Aragon and stirring up patriotic sentiments and the ever-present controversies surrounding water politics, have meant that it has maintained a high profile in politics and daily life in the region since the 1970s and therefore in the Aragonese consciousness. Its defence has provided *aragonesista* and nationalist parties with opportunities for speeches, newspaper interviews and rallies, which are an important part of nation-building rhetoric and are instrumental in the promotion of national consciousness and identity. In addition, it has provided opportunities to raise key nationalist issues such as identity, territory, patrimonial assets and natural heritage. Zimmer's assertion that most European nations possess a

‘crowd symbol’, around which popular feeling and national belonging can be generated and sustained is also particularly applicable to Aragon and the Ebro. Romantic and Herderian concepts of organic nationalism and the affinity between the people of an area and their environment are also important to the study of the Ebro in *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism where the character and identity of the Aragonese people has frequently been associated with the harshness of its natural environment and the Ebro with life-giving and life-sustaining properties

As the Ebro has an economic as well as a symbolic significance in *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism Brass’ argument that resource-inspired mobilisation can convert communities into nationalities and Marxist-based theories put forward by Michael Hechter and Tom Nairn on core-periphery relationships and ‘internal colonialism’ also highlight areas of importance to the study. Marxist based theories along these lines were prevalent in the left-wing *aragonesismo* of the 1970s and still hold some sway in more recent anti-transfer arguments. Also, Hechter’s theory that ‘uneven development’ places the economy at the heart of the debate in that it sees nationalism as cultural resurgence in the face of relative economic disadvantage is important in relation to the proposed transfers of water from the Ebro before Aragon’s demands are met. Theoretical considerations of sub-state minority nationalism as a response to a particular set of circumstances or grievances provide many parallels with the Aragonese case as do William’s and Brass’s assertions that unfulfilled resource potential can be a powerful mobilising influence in the development of sub-state nationalism especially if it becomes linked with regional distinctiveness and a feeling of exploitation. Finally, studies of European regionalist and nationalist sub-state parties help us to understand the CHA’s thinking on environmentalism and the ‘New Left’ and its rejection of Romantic attitudes to natural elements of their territory.

Whilst it is necessary to recognise that focusing on one element can give it an overriding importance at the expense of others the Ebro has, throughout the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, been an integrally associated with *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism in the contexts of identity, economic development and grievance with central government. However, it is obvious that its symbolic power is considerably greater in times of intensified feeling when it is under threat and as the

following chapters will show its importance and the way in which it has been used by different *aragonesista* and nationalist groups has varied considerably. For instance, today's nationalist party does not regard the Ebro in the same Romantic way as its forerunner at the beginning of the twentieth century and has shifted its focus to an environmental and patrimonial perspective. As Olsen, Lekan, Deudney, Hooson and Williams argue environmentalism is important to nationalists because of its connection with identity, a feeling of connectedness to a particular place, the preservation of a beloved homeland and environmental stewardship. These are of particular importance to the CHA.

CHAPTER 3 ORIGINS OF ARAGONESE NATIONALISM AND ITS DIFFERENCE FROM *ARAGONESISMO*

Aragonese nationalism has its origins in the first quarter of the twentieth century. Scholars have, however, traced regionalist and *aragonesista* sentiments back to earlier periods. Juan Pablo Fusi traces regionalist sentiments from the time of the French invasion, and argues that regionalist tendencies first found expression during the *Sexenio Revolucionario* (1868-1874).¹ Antonio Peiró traces *aragonesista* sentiments back to the end of the fifteenth and early part of the sixteenth centuries and Gaspar Mairal places the formation of an Aragonese identity in the period between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries.²

Peiró and Pinilla identified three strands of political *aragonesismo* in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.³ These range from the autonomist goals of republican groups, the regionalism of a weak conservative right-wing Zaragozaan bourgeois movement and the embryonic nationalism of a group of Aragonese emigrants in Barcelona. The *aragonesismo* of the first two groups was weak and the Barcelona group, which had a membership of just several hundred people. In the view of Peiró and Pinilla this was the only one that could be regarded as a mass movement within the relativity of this term.⁴ Clearly, it was not possible to speak of public opinion associated with this ‘movement’, however, its magazine *El Ebro* had a circulation in Aragon and attracted collaboration from *aragonesistas* within the region and other emigrant communities. The oldest of the strands, originating in the last third of the nineteenth century, was Autonomist Republicanism. This was a progressive movement arguing for political autonomy for Aragon and the

¹ Juan Pablo Fusi, ed. *España Autonomías* (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1989), p. 91.

² See Peiró, *El aragonesismo*, p.33 and Mairal, *La identidad*, p. 104.

³ Peiró and Pinilla, *Nacionalismo*. See also Serrano, ‘Aragonesismo entre 1972 y 1982’, p. 133.

⁴ Up to 1929 the Barcelona group had 20 or so members which had risen to between 200 and 300 in 1936. Peiró and Pinilla, *Nacionalismo*, pp. 107, 151. Its base, the Centro Aragonés in Barcelona, had between 1,000-1,500 members in the period from its foundation up to 1920, Carlos Serrano, ‘El nacionalismo aragonés en Cataluña’, in *Historia del aragonesismo*, ed. by Antonio Peiró (Zaragoza: Rolde, 1999), pp. 77-92 (p. 83). In *El Ebro* (June 1922) there is the claim that it is the magazine with the largest circulation in Aragon and that it is also circulated in other regions. It is estimated that circulation was around 1,000.

construction of a federal republic as a solution to caciquism and agrarian problems. It had a working class following which, Peiró and Pinilla argue, was attracted by its republicanism rather than its autonomist content and whilst it was not truly *aragonesista*, it had important points of contact with *aragonesismo*. The second strand, the right-wing Zaragozan regionalism, originated in 1897 with the Asamblea Regionalista del Bajo Aragón. This was inspired by middle class Zaragozan intellectuals and bourgeoisie who formed regionalist groups, such as the Liga Regional Aragonesa (1910) and the Union Regionalista Aragonesa (1916), which ‘timidly’ called for Aragonese autonomy.⁵ Peiró and Pinilla postulate that had the Aragonese middle class not been so weak and unable to maintain stable political organisations the Asamblea Regionalista could have marked the beginning of a nationalist party similar to the Partido Nacionalista Vasco or the Lliga Regionalista, both of which had their origins in this period.⁶ The third and most significant strand, the *aragonesista* group in Barcelona, was made up of Aragonese emigrants who were mainly professional people, small to medium-level businessmen and industrialists.⁷ In 1917, they formed the Unión Regionalista Aragonesa (URA) which was renamed the Unión Aragonesista (UA) in 1919.⁸ This was the most coherent of the three *aragonesista* strands and between 1919 and 1923 evolved in the direction of nationalism. This evolution owed much to two factors. First, to attempts by two of its leading figures, Gaspar Torrente and Julio Calvo Alfaro, to formulate a nationalist ideology in the period 1918-1936. Second, the influence of the Catalan environment and the fact that some of the group’s members, such as Torrente and Calvo Alfaro, maintained close links with the more advanced Catalan regionalist and nationalist groups, Lliga Regionalista and Esquerra Catalana (ERC). Whilst their ideas were much more radical than those of the two *aragonesista* strands in Aragon, Torrente and Calvo Alfaro maintained contact with the Aragonese groups and the UA discreetly supported regionalist candidates in elections in various districts of Aragon, defended political autonomy for Aragon and deliberated the principles for governing Aragon in the event of this. Its magazine *El Ebro* became the voice of Aragonese emigrants and sectors of Aragonese society who engaged with *aragonesista* themes

⁵ Peiró and Pinilla, *Nacionalismo*, p. 234.

⁶ Peiró and Pinilla, *Nacionalismo*, p. 30.

⁷ One of its major weaknesses was a lack of synchronisation with workers movements and the left in general. See Serrano, ‘El nacionalismo aragonés en Cataluña’, p. 91.

⁸ Although the formation of the Estado Aragonés in 1933 took away some of its functions it remained in existence until the autonomist Congress of Caspe in 1936.

and held autonomist aspirations. However, the fact that the major thrust of political *aragonesismo* in this period came from outside Aragon meant that it remained somewhat removed from Aragonese public opinion. As a result of this, and ideological differences between the *aragonesistas* in Barcelona and Zaragoza, the two groups never managed to come together as one organisation and were unable to achieve the same level of success as the Catalan nationalists with regard to approval of a Statute of Autonomy before the Civil War brought this process to an abrupt end in 1936. In addition, mainstream political groups in Aragon had shown little interest in the actions necessary to achieve approval of a Statute of Autonomy. It was only towards the end of the Second Republic and with the support of the republican parties of the recently victorious Frente Popular that it was possible to initiate a process that ultimately led to the Congress of Caspe 1936 and the drafting of a Statute of Autonomy.⁹ This was presided over by some of the Barcelona nationalists under the auspices of the recently formed nationalist party, Estado Aragonés with Gaspar Torrente as president, and supported by the Frente Popular. This failure to gain approval would have far reaching consequences and prove to be a source of Aragonese grievance from 1977 onwards when regions that had gained assent, Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia, would be deemed ‘historical nationalities’ and accorded a range of privileges which Aragon was not.

Some historians have argued that to place too great an emphasis on the *aragonesismo* that developed in Barcelona among these Aragonese emigrants in the first third of the twentieth century carries the risk of crediting it with too high a degree of importance.¹⁰ However, whilst it is acknowledged that it was relatively unstructured, testimonial and intellectual in nature, influenced by Catalanism and not connected with the majority of the Aragonese population it was the most relevant of the *aragonesista* currents and the focus of the later nationalist party CHA who wished to create a link with its figures, political thought and *aragonesista* tradition.

⁹ The Frente Popular was a coalition of left-wing republicans, socialists and communists formed in 1936 which triumphed in the last elections of the Second Republic, 16 February 1936, before the coupe that led to the Civil War.

¹⁰ See Forcadell, ‘Las fantasías’, p. 143.

Nationalist Ideology in the Period Up To 1936

Attempts to formulate a nationalist ideology and a theoretical justification for their movement, centred largely on Torrente and Calvo Alfaro in Barcelona. Among the Zaragozan regionalists only Andrés Giménez Soler attempted to reflect on the question of nation, *patria* and regionalism which resulted in the publication of a series of three articles in the UA's magazine *El Ebro* in 1920, entitled 'Doctrina regionalista: ideas e ideales'.¹¹ It was, however, the Aragonese nationalists in Barcelona who were the most prolific in their writings and theorising and who used more precise political concepts than the regionalists in Zaragoza, probably as a result of their contact with Catalan nationalism. However, as Peiró points out, there was a lack of ideological consistency and some contradictions and changes due to the evolution of their ideas over time, which to some degree impeded an in-depth elaboration of the subject.¹² The incompleteness and embryonic nature of ideological development in this period meant that the early nationalist movement looked to other aspects, such as history and unifying force of Costa, myths and the Ebro in order to fill this ideological vacuum. Their use of the first three of these elements has been the subject of much study; the Ebro, however, has not.¹³

Gaspar Torrente is regarded by later nationalists as the most important figure of political *aragonesismo* in the early period and the 'father' of contemporary Aragonese nationalism. He was involved in all of the campaigns for autonomy and with the principal organisations, UA of Barcelona and the first nationalist political party Estado Aragonés (EA). He also published many written works in magazines and newspapers and was closely involved with *El Ebro*, *El Ideal de Aragón* and *Renacimiento Aragonés*. The early political trajectory of Torrente is marked by his relations with the Lliga Regionalista, passing on to a more nationalist approach while involved with *El Ebro*. Torrente came to represent a more radical nationalism than Calvo Alfaro and inclined towards Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya. During his period in Graus (Unión Regionalista de Graus), 1928-1931, he took a more regionalist stance before finally moving towards federalist and radical left ideals. In

¹¹ Antonio Peiró, 'Nación y estado en el pensamiento aragonesista de la primera mitad del siglo XX', in *Historia del aragonesismo*, ed. by Antonio Peiró, pp. 107-120 (p. 107).

¹² Peiró, 'Nación y estado', p. 118. See also Forcadell, 'Las fantasías', p. 151.

¹³ See Peiró, 'Nación y estado', p. 118 and Serrano, 'Los mitos', pp. 64, 67.

this phase, he took a decisive role in the preparation and development of the autonomist Congress of Caspe (May 1936). Following the first debate on nationalism in *El Ebro* in 1919 he attempted to lay the foundations of Aragonese nationalism in the years between 1919 and 1922. Rather than looking for a specific theory of nationalism he began with a more sentimental conception of love of his *patria*.¹⁴ He went on to theorise on the reality of an Aragonese nation, which he compared to the ‘artificialness’ of the Spanish state and on the need for Aragonese autonomy, constantly drawing attention to the ills of centralism and caciquism. In *Nacionalismo Aragonés* he attempted to demonstrate the existence of an Aragonese national sentiment based on history, national character and an Aragonese flag.¹⁵ He also alluded to a *raza propia*, which could be equated with what we now refer to as *etnia* or ethnicity, although he never fully developed this aspect of nationalism. *Patriotismo Aragonés* was an attempt at a theorisation of Aragonese nationalism and in *¿Qué es Aragón?* he rejected the concept of Spain and spoke of the Spanish state as centralist and oppressive, describing Aragon as an exploited colony which he compared with Cuba and the Philippines before 1898.¹⁶ This conceptualization of exploited colony also gained currency in the post-Franco period. *El problema de las naciones ibéricas* was a response to the Catalanist, Antoni Rovira i Virgili’s division of the Spanish state into four nations: Spain, Catalonia, Vasconia and Galicia.¹⁷ Here, Torrente called for recognition of Aragon as an Iberian nation and alluded, for the first time, to the fact that Aragon had its own language localised in the mountain area of Ribagorza.

The period in which the Barcelona group was active was characterized by three distinct political forms in Spain: monarchy (1917-23), dictatorship of General Primo de Rivera (1923-30) and republic (1931-36). During the dictatorship many works by Torrente and Calvo Alfaro were subject to censorship and *El Ebro* took on a more literary and less political aspect with, as we will see in Chapter 4, poetry and articles on Aragon’s history acting a vehicle for political messages. The uprising of Primo de Rivera in Barcelona in September 1923 marked the beginning of 7 years of

¹⁴ Peiró and Pinilla, *Nacionalismo*, p. 97.

¹⁵ Gaspar Torrente, ‘Nacionalismo aragonés’, *El Ebro*, No. 20, 5 December 1919.

¹⁶ Gaspar Torrente, ‘Patriotismo aragonés’, *El Ebro*, No. 57, August 1921 and Gaspar Torrente, ‘Reflexión: ¿Qué es Aragón?’, *El Ebro*, No. 74, November 1922.

¹⁷ Gaspar Torrente, ‘El problema de las naciones ibéricas’, *El Ebro*, No. 75, December 1922 - January 1923.

dictatorship, which brought with it a significant reduction in *aragonesista* activities and a more cultural and literary tone for *El Ebro*. In the early stages of the dictatorship the regionalist and nationalist groups had placed their hopes in Primo de Rivera to fulfill their autonomist aims; however, these were dashed when he dissolved the Mancomunidad de Cataluña. During this period, Torrente reduced his political activities to a minimum and in 1928 moved to Graus. The crisis into which the dictatorship entered in 1929 saw a reactivation of *aragonesista* activity. However, in the 1930s Torrente was more moderate and whilst he did not abandon the concept of nationalism, he moved away from it as a political theory and increasingly used it in conjunction with regionalism. During his period in Graus, he edited the regionalist, agrarian-orientated newspaper *El Ideal de Aragón* which may account for his adoption of a more regionalist stance. The Second Republic allowed the development of a process leading to political autonomy in *comunidades históricas diferenciadas* which led to Statutes of Autonomy for Catalonia, Basque Country and Galicia. In 1931, Torrente became disillusioned when Aragon did not take action to obtain its statute of autonomy and was critical of Aragonese politicians for putting other interests before those of Aragon.

Following this, and the victory of the centre-right, he returned to Barcelona where he focused his endeavours on the quest for self-government for Aragon, the creation, in 1933, of the first republican nationalist political party EA, of which he became president, and the production of its newspaper *Renacimiento Aragonés* (1935-1936). The Zaragoza bourgeoisie responded to the creation of EA by accusing Torrente of creating a Catalanist party. EA declared itself to be left-wing, antifascist and in favour of the creation of a Federation of Iberian Nationalities of which Aragon would be part. Torrente headed the autonomist campaign which culminated in the Congress of Caspe in May 1936. The formulation of a draft Statute of Autonomy, with the support of the parties of the left saw the reappearance in 1936 of the magazine *El Ebro*, which had ceased publication in 1933, and was, for a short time, published in Caspe. However, the outbreak of Civil War prevented the ratification of the bases for a Statute of Autonomy which had been approved in Caspe. In 1938 Torrente took up the post of Commissioner of the Generalitat of Orlans in Lérida until he was imprisoned for more than a year by Franco's troops. Following this he remained outside political activity and died in Barcelona in 1970.

Calvo Alfaro, who identified more closely with the symbolism of the Ebro and wrote several poems dedicated to it, was more theoretical and moderate than Torrente and opted for a federal state as opposed to Torrent's conception of a confederation of Iberian Nations.¹⁸ In addition, he used more moderate language and spoke more of nationality than of nation. His most important works included *Aragón Libre* where he argued in favour of an Aragonese Republican Party and autonomy.¹⁹ This was followed by *Nacionalismo Aragonés* which studied the differences between 'conscious and sub-conscious' nationalism.²⁰ At this time the distinction between regionalism and nationalism was not clearly defined and in *Doctrina regionalista de Aragón* he defined Aragon as a region in the geographical sense and a nationality in the historical, political and spiritual sense.²¹ In relation to frontiers he argued that Aragon's frontiers are clearly defined geographically and ethnographically.²² His ideas evolved and during the Second Republic when he published *Aragón Estado* which began with the affirmation that Aragon is a region, which was a nationality, and ought to be a state.²³ He referred to the need for an Aragonese Autonomist party in order to avoid Aragonese interests being dependent on centralist parties and caciquism and argued that centralism was causing Aragon to disappear and, faced with this, considered the possibility of creating an Aragonese state. Whilst Torrente clearly affiliated with the left, hence his later adoption as a 'symbol' of the CHA, Calvo Alfaro believed in an autonomist party that would rise above such ideologies and unite both the left and the right, an ideal more akin to the postulates of the PAR, but one which would not come to fruition.

The articles, debates and attempts to theorise and formulate a nationalist ideology that appeared in the magazine *El Ebro* illustrate that for the early nationalist group the essential constituents of the 'nation' and Aragonese identity were history, important Aragonese figures, territory and the Ebro, the will to form a nation and,

¹⁸ Peiró and Pinilla *Nacionalismo*, p. 110.

¹⁹ Julio Calvo Alfaro, 'Aragón libre', *El Ebro*, No. 6, 20 April 1919.

²⁰ Julio Calvo Alfaro, 'Nacionalismo aragonés', *El Ebro*, No. 78, March 1923.

²¹ Julio Calvo Alfaro, *Doctrina regionalista de Aragón*.

²² Serrano, *Identidad y diversidad*, p. 132.

²³ Julio Calvo Alfaro, *Reflexiones sobre Aragón*.

finally, a flag.²⁴ The Ebro was interlinked with a number of the other elements, such as history, territory, Costa and another of Aragon's powerful symbols, the Virgin of Pilar. In the absence of a flag it could be argued that the Ebro was the most immediate and tangible of these elements. With regard to important Aragonese figures Serrano notes that in *El Ebro* there are 84 articles and collaborations on Costa, 21 on Goya and 11 on Lanuza.²⁵ However, the Ebro, which he does not mention, occupies a prominent place in the magazine as a father figure, life-giver, source of economic redemption and development and as a binding element (*aglutinador*) of both Aragon and its identity becoming ingrained in almost all aspects of Aragonese nationalism in this period. In addition, it occupied a paramount position as the name of the group's magazine which had a frontline role in transmitting their debates and theorisation. However, whilst previous studies have explored the water/territory relationship and hydrological myths in the *aragonesismo* of this group, little attention has been given specifically to the Ebro, which as we will see in Chapter 4, in addition to being the title of the magazine was also the subject of frequent reference and poems and an integral part of many articles, with around 31 references to it, ranging in length from short statements to lengthy poems. It also figured prominently in the group's interpretations of Aragonese history, homeland, ethno-symbolic memory and as a source of great optimism for the future.²⁶ In addition, it formed an integral part of the important theme of irrigation and water policy which was central to the *aragonesismo* of the period up to 1936, being present in proclamations, political manifestoes, articles and bases of a Statute of Autonomy and would be taken up once again by the *aragonesista* centre-right in the period after the Franco dictatorship. As later sections will show this embedding of the Ebro in a variety of topics ranging from identity, to economy and its links with a wide range of aspects of Aragonese nationalism would also be a characteristic of the *aragonesismo* that emerged in the period from the 1970s onwards albeit for different reasons and in a more reactive manner with the introduction of a grievance element as a result to proposals to transfer water from the Ebro.

²⁴ There was no flag until the 1920s and then it was that of a particular group and not of Aragon as a whole.

²⁵ Serrano, 'Los mitos', p. 74, note 11.

²⁶ See Peiró, 'Nación y estado', p. 116 and Serrano, 'El aragonesismo costista', p. 12.

Analysis of the differences between *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism

As previously indicated the terms *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism are subject to a considerable degree of ambiguity and debate. With the exception of historians of *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism such as Peiró and Serrano, *Siete de Aragón* columnists, Jesús Sebastián Lorente and Chaime Marcuello and from time to time the Aragonese territorial political parties there is little attempt to explain and analyse what is meant by these terms. This perhaps assumes that the distinction is self-evident but to those outside Aragon this is not necessarily the case. The purpose of this section is, therefore, to attempt to define the terms and consider how they differ before moving on in subsequent chapters to consider how groups and political parties termed *aragonesista* and nationalist differ in their views and use of the Ebro.

The term *aragonesismo* has been in use from the final third of the nineteenth century, although some issues that fall within this term, such as linguistic rights, apply only to the last third of the twentieth century.²⁷ In *El aragonesismo*, however, Peiró uses the term in relation to earlier periods arguing that he does so in a generic form to apply to the defence of the Aragonese people and institutions peculiar to Aragon against those outside. Within this qualification he considers early examples of *aragonesismo* from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries before going on to study the *aragonesista* movements and organisations of the first third of the twentieth century, the Transition and under democracy.

The first reference to the term ‘Aragonese nationalism’ appeared in an article written by Calvo Alfaro, in October 1919 entitled ‘*Nacionalismo aragonés*’ in which he studied the differences between conscious and sub-conscious nationalists.²⁸ However, in the period when Calvo Alfaro and Torrente were attempting to formulate a nationalist ideology and theoretical justification for their movement distinction between the terms regionalism, nationalism, and *aragonesismo* was vague and strongly influenced by political trends current in Catalonia where they resided.

²⁷ Peiró, *El aragonesismo*, p. 15.

²⁸ Peiró, *El aragonesismo*, p. 15.

Aragonesismo like nationalism encompasses a wide variety of different meanings. Breuilly argues that nationalism ‘can be a doctrine – an “ism” representing an idea. It can be a sentiment – a common sense of identity. Or it can be about politics – parties, governments, political movements. These may all be interlinked but they are not the same thing’. This can equally be applied to *aragonesismo*.²⁹ When split into the same three categories *aragonesismo* also relates to a doctrine, a sentiment and common sense of identity and may or may not have a political aspect. *Aragonesismo* as a doctrine is aptly summed up by the PAR as ‘Aragon’. As a sentiment it is charged with a deep feeling for what is specific to Aragon and encompasses feelings of pride, love and defence of things that are particular to Aragon. In a political sense it is defined as a concept which gives priority to territorial interests and the explicit recognition of self-government.³⁰ It is the wider and more politically neutral of the two terms as it does not have a specifically defined political space but can confute in many different political positions and be held by many who would not declare themselves nationalists in a political sense. One can be *aragonesista* without being nationalist. This is demonstrated by the political *aragonesismo* of the Aragonese territorial party PAR. Aragonese nationalism, on the other hand, is a combination of the two components, *aragonesismo* and nationalism, with nationalism being viewed as one of the political articulations of *aragonesismo*.

Aragonesista issues are also supported by many who do not belong to or vote for one of Aragon’s territorial political parties. This means that support for issues, such as defence of water, goes far beyond the number of people who actually vote for the *aragonesista*/nationalist parties, as witnessed by the numbers participating in the anti-transfer demonstrations.³¹ Moreover, state parties in Aragon, such as the PSOE, on occasions claim to have *aragonesista* roots and like the other state parties in Aragon support ‘*aragonesista* issues’ such as opposition to the transfer of water from the Ebro.³² The fusion in the 1970s of a faction from the territorial based Partido

²⁹ John Breuilly, ‘Fuzzy States and Hazy Nations’, *The Birmingham Magazine*, No. 11, October 1999, www.publications.bham.ac.uk/birmingham_magazine/b_magazine1996-1999/b99_20.htm [accessed 5/6/05].

³⁰ Serrano, ‘Aragonesismo entre 1972 y 1982’, p. 133.

³¹ This figure has reached up to 400,000 at any one time, which is far beyond the numbers who vote for the nationalist parties.

³² ‘Iglesias asegura que el Pacto del Agua es un “seguro a todo riesgo”...’, *Europa Press*, 1 August 2000, <http://hisagua.cedex.es/bbdd/Noticias/Textos/ps010800aa.htm> [accessed 14/11/00].

Socialista Aragonés (PSA) with the PSOE resulted in the PSOE in Aragon having a strong regionalist component, which created competition for the purely regional parties. It could therefore be argued that *aragonesista* issues can not be hijacked or used exclusively for regionalist and nationalist purposes. This has two consequences in relation to the Ebro. Firstly, for the regionalist/nationalist parties it takes away some of its ‘thunder’ as a purely *aragonesista* issue. Secondly, it makes the message of state parties supporting *aragonesista* issues attractive to those who wish to defend Aragonese interests but would prefer to vote for a state party. However, it is clear that the regional branches of state parties are obliged to follow the policies laid down by their national or federal executives. This can result in a complete change in direction on policies such as water, as has been the case with the Planes Hidrológicos Nacionales (PHNs). For instance, in the PHN put forward by the PSOE in the early 1990s the party was in favour of the transfer of water from the Ebro whilst the PP was against. For the 2000 PHN the positions were reversed. In addition to a certain degree of ‘*aragonesization*’ of state parties it is possible to detect a diffuse *aragonesismo* in Aragonese institutions and media which is especially marked in relation to water and the Ebro.

In the three periods analysed in this study different degrees of emphasis are placed on various aspects of *aragonesismo* which in turn reflect in how the Ebro is viewed. In the early period *aragonesismo* is viewed primarily as a patriotic sentiment and a love of homeland and all things Aragonese and similarly the Ebro is seen as a ‘patriotic river’. *Aragonesismo* calls for the Aragonese to wake up to themselves as a people and the Ebro is assigned a vital role in their history, identity and future. The *aragonesismo* of the 1970s also incorporates this call for the Aragonese to reawaken to themselves as a people after the long period of the Franco dictatorship and the suppression of regional identities. However, the *aragonesismo* of the 1970 onwards is reactive and defensive and the Ebro is viewed in a defensive way. With the emergence of two *aragonesista* political parties in 1977 and 1986 it takes on a more specific political component which combines a strong sense of grievance and defence of territory but from two distinct political and ideological stances and models of economic development, one predominantly agrarian and the other fiercely environmental. The following section examines how the term *aragonesismo* is used in these three periods.

As we will see in Chapter 4 in the 1920s and 1930s *aragonesismo* is used by the early nationalist group in Barcelona to refer to a patriotic sentiment, a love of one's homeland, an affirmation of national distinctiveness and a claim to certain rights as a distinct people. As always, it is devoid of any separatist connotation. In Calvo Alfaro's writings it is used primarily in relation to national distinctiveness and love of homeland. In *El aragonesismo y la servidumbre económica de Aragón* he defines *aragonesismo* as, 'the affirmation of the Aragonese personality as a nationalist function within the Iberian communities'.³³ In *Doctrina Regionalista de Aragón* he poses the question, 'what is *aragonesismo*', to which he replies, 'it is the affirmation of wanting to live for Aragon'.³⁴

In *El Ebro* Torrente attempts to define *aragonesismo* on a number of occasions, in a manner which appears to be specific but is in fact a little vague and confined to the realm of feelings rather than specific plans of action. It is an awakening of self-awareness as a people, it as something which teaches them to love everything that is Aragonese, such as music and art.³⁵ It is a desire for the Aragonese to recover their personality, 'lost as a result of the actions of those opposed to the right of peoples and races to be self-governing'.³⁶ On a number of occasions it is portrayed as a voice or 'wail' calling the Aragonese to wake up to themselves, their exclusive personality and their future.³⁷ It calls them to action but beyond calls for self-awareness and various claims of 'Aragon for the Aragonese' and calls for a 'legitimate' Aragonese flag is not specific on the subsequent course of action.³⁸

In *El Ideal de Aragón*, published by Torrente in Graus between 1930 and 1932, in a period characterised by political change and the quest by the left to formulate a Statute of Autonomy, the term *aragonesismo* is once again used on a number of

³³ Julio Calvo Alfaro, 'El aragonesismo y la servidumbre económica de Aragón', *El Ebro*, No. 51, 20 April 1921.

³⁴ Julio Calvo Alfaro, 'Doctrina regionalista de Aragón', *El Ideal de Aragón*, No. 6, 20 August, 1930, p. 2.

³⁵ Gaspar Torrente, 'Aragonesismo II', *El Ebro*, No. 5, 5 April 1919, p. 1.

³⁶ Gaspar Torrente, 'La crisis del regionalismo en Aragón' cited by Carlos Serrano in 'El autogobierno de Gaspar Torrente', *Siete de Aragón*, 17-23 March 1995, p. 23.

³⁷ Gaspar Torrente, 'Aragonesismo', *El Ebro*, No. 4, 5 March 1919, pp. 3-4 and Gaspar Torrente, 'Aragonesismo II', *El Ebro*, No. 5, 5 April 1919, p. 1.

³⁸ Torrente, 'La crisis del regionalismo en Aragón' cited by Serrano, 'El autogobierno', p. 23.

occasions. In 'El Aragonismo en acción' Torrente points out that *aragonismo* is entering into an active phase. He defines it as a voice of alarm, a voice of referred sentiment, the axis of patriotic fervour and a sentiment to which everything Aragonese ought to attach itself.³⁹

In the late 1970s, following the long period of dictatorship and absence of any *aragonista* activity, the *aragonista* tradition is defined by *aragonista* intellectuals Eloy Fernández Clemente and Guillermo Fatás as the understanding of Aragon as a *unidad diferenciada*.⁴⁰ They argue that in the period after the Civil War this sentiment was reduced to 'a folkloric level'. However, a resurgence of *aragonismo* took place at the end of the 1960s and in the 1970s. This new *aragonismo*, they argue, appeared as a response to the way in which Aragon had been treated in the period of the dictatorship, 'in previous years the Aragonese territory had lost importance in the Spanish state as a whole. Aragonese patrimony (its people, energy and financial resources...) "escaped" to other areas whilst in Aragon nobody raised the voice of alarm'.⁴¹ Against this backdrop, the new *aragonismo* is seen by left-wing *aragonista* authors and publications such as *Andalán* and *Rolde* as a response to underdevelopment and the capitalism of large Spanish firms, such as electric companies, which exploited Aragon with the backing of the Franco regime. In this situation *aragonismo* also takes on the character of a radical movement in the pursuit of democracy. Moreover, the announcement in 1973 of the government's intention to transfer water from the Ebro to Catalonia, which, it is argued would 'mortgage' the possibilities of Aragonese development in the future, together with the construction of nuclear power plants on the Ebro at Sástago and Escatrón gave rise to movements of a clearly *aragonista* character opposed to these projects and aimed at defending Aragonese territory and identity, which could be regarded as a precursor to the left-wing *aragonista*/nationalist party CHA. This form of *aragonismo* can therefore be viewed as a defence of territory alongside a defence of the identity of its people. In the late 1970s Aragon's territorial party the PAR tended to use the term regionalism more than *aragonismo* which was in

³⁹ Gaspar Torrente, 'El Aragonismo en acción', *El Ideal de Aragón*, No. 6, 20 August, 1930, p. 1.

⁴⁰ Fernández Clemente and Fatás, p. 219.

⁴¹ Fernández Clemente and Fatás, p. 219.

keeping with its origins as a regionalist party. However, in 1981 it makes reference to its magazine *Alcorze* as ‘the spokes piece of the most pure *aragonesismo*’.⁴²

In the period from the 1980s a number of meanings are assigned to the term *aragonesismo* by historians, political analysts and *aragonesista* political parties themselves. Historian Antonio Peiró argues that over the course of the twentieth century the term *aragonesista* has been used to describe a variety of diverse movements which have little in common with one another.⁴³ Consequently, those focusing on political grievances and claims go hand in hand with those espousing little more than a love of the Aragonese *jota* or devotion to the Virgin of Pilar. To illustrate the diversity of Aragonese figures that have been included in the category of *aragonesista* he refers to Carlos Royo Villanova’s *El regionalismo aragonés*, published in 1978, pointing out that in the introduction its author pays homage to figures ranging from Aragonese kings to illustrious liberals, Carlists, anarchists, and members of the recently legalised Partido Comunista de España as well as a member of Aragon’s Parliament during Franco regime.⁴⁴ The diverse nature of *aragonesismo* is also highlighted by José Antonio Labordeta who expressed the opinion that *aragonesismo* ‘is, if we are sincere, a varied mixture in which a variety of questions conjugate that range from the Virgin of Pilar to opposition to water transfer, non-irrigated land and the Pyrenees’.⁴⁵

For Peiró the term *aragonesismo* has three different meanings.⁴⁶ The first is clearly political. In this sense *aragonesismo* is equated with the Aragonese people’s claim to rights as members of a community, which defines itself as a nationality. These include individual rights, such as linguistic rights and collective rights, such as the right to self-determination. In addition, *aragonesismo* is associated with defence of territory and the right of the Aragonese to make decisions about their own natural resources and how to interact with other peoples that make up the Spanish nation. The second meaning is also political and refers to the right of the Aragonese people to enjoy equal rights to other peoples administered by the Spanish state and not to be

⁴² ‘Figuras de regionalismo aragonés’, *Alcorze*, February 1981, p. 12.

⁴³ Peiró, *El aragonesismo*, p. 13.

⁴⁴ Peiró, *El aragonesismo*, p. 13.

⁴⁵ Pilar Barranco, ‘El 15-N ha sido el éxito de una apuesta segura por Aragón’, *Alcorze*, No. 112, August 1992, pp. 6-7.

⁴⁶ Peiró, *El aragonesismo*, pp. 14-15.

discriminated against by it. More specifically, this relates to having the same level of self-government as other autonomous communities. In particular, communities such as the Basque Country, Catalonia and Galicia which were allowed to follow the fast-track to autonomy, under Article 151 of the Spanish Constitution and received greater levels of autonomy and devolved powers or *competencias*. Thirdly, the term is used in a vaguer sense as love of, or interest in, one's homeland, without having a political connotation.

In the 1990s there is considerable debate amongst *Siete de Aragón* columnists as to whether *aragonesismo* is merely a sentiment or much more. Sebastián Lorente places *aragonesismo* in the realm of sentiment arguing that it is the rationalisation of a deep, ancestral sentiment towards what is specific and generic to Aragon and that Aragonese nationalism is the political and ideological orchestration of *aragonesismo* 'that attempts to materialise *aragonesista* sentiment and passion on a plane of actions and realities'.⁴⁷ He adds that whilst it is imperative that Aragonese nationalism should be *aragonesista*, one can be *aragonesista* without being nationalist. Chaime Marcuello points out that all 'isms' form part of the realm of ideologies and that these are intimately bound up with feelings. However, he argues that the construction, defence, vindication, action and struggle for Aragon, as *aragonesismo* is, should not be reduced to a sentimental question. It is a political option, possibly charged with sentiment, but it is not merely sentimental. In this interpretation *aragonesismo* is an option for critical and creative construction of an Aragonese society capable of governing itself in a cooperative, intelligent and imaginative way.⁴⁸

For the *aragonesista* political parties of the post Franco period, PAR and CHA, *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism are viewed from two distinct perspectives. In the 1990s the founder and former President of the PAR, Hipólito Gómez de las Rocas, used the terms in an interchangeable way:

⁴⁷ Jesús J. Sebastián Lorente, 'Nacionalismo y aragonesismo', *Siete de Aragón*, 13-19 January 1995, p. 10-11.

⁴⁸ Chaime Marcuello, 'Fútbol, patria y sentimiento', *Siete de Aragón*, 1-7 April 1994, p. 32.

Aragonese nationalism, or by another name *aragonesismo*, is much more than a party; it is an inextinguishable ember which will continue to give light when all of us have gone.

Aragonese nationalism (or political *aragonesismo*) is only feared by those who do not want the Constitution to come about, those who uncomplicatedly think that we should conform to being inferior to the Basques, Catalans, Galicians, Andalucians, lovers of political paroxysm and ever present cowards.⁴⁹

The current President of the PAR José Ángel Biel defines *aragonesismo* as, ‘to give priority to the Aragonese reality, to serve the interests of the community before any other. To put into daily practice the idea that Aragon comes first’.⁵⁰

Present day left-wing Aragonese nationalism combines *aragonesismo* and nationalism, with nationalism being viewed as one of the political articulations of *aragonesismo*. The nationalist party CHA, like Sebastián Lorente, use the term *aragonesismo* to refer to a sentiment and regard nationalism as one of its political articulations arguing that nationalism is the political proposal that defines and identifies it in the political spectrum.⁵¹ The political aspect of the CHA’s nationalism is expanded by its General Secretary, Chesús Bernal as follows:

Nationalism – is a project of the rights of the people made up by the Aragonese as a group subject to its own destiny and democratic choices. To be a nationalist is to think that Aragon is a country that forms part of a plurinational state that is Spain. It is federalism, the integration between centralism and self-determination taken to extremes.⁵²

In the post-dictatorship period, whilst Aragonese nationalism has been closely associated with revival of Aragonese identity and culture both it and *aragonesismo* have been dominated by the quest for the same level of autonomy as the so-called historical nationalities, Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia. As indicated earlier this quest for equity and full autonomy as a fundamental aspect of Aragonese nationalism is summed up by the founding editor of *Andalán* Eloy Fernández Clemente as they want Aragon to have maximum autonomy, no more; no less than

⁴⁹ Gómez de las Rocas, *La participación política*, p. 40.

⁵⁰ Interview with José Ángel Biel, *Siete de Aragón*, 18 Feb-10 March, 2002, pp. 4-6, p. 6.

⁵¹ Chunta Aragonesista, III Asamblea Nacional, Teruel, 4-5 April 1992, p. 29.

⁵² Chesús Bernal, ‘No es nuestro Estatuto’, *Siete de Aragón*, 15-21 April 1994, p. 27.

the other Spanish autonomous communities.⁵³ With regard to the PAR Emilio Eiroa, maintained that they wished to be nationalists in a constitutional sense, ‘in the sense of having personality, self-government and the same autonomy as the rest’.⁵⁴

Summary

In the early part of the twentieth century *aragonesismo* was viewed primarily as a patriotic sentiment with the Ebro viewed in a similar way as a ‘patriotic river’. It carried with it a call for the Aragonese to wake up to themselves as a people and to their future and the Ebro was given an important ethno-symbolic place in their past, present and future. The *aragonesismo* of the 1970s also incorporated a sense of awakening or reawakening of Aragonese identity but took on a strongly reactive and defensive aspect in light of the proposal to transfer water, with the Ebro once again being intrinsically involved, this time as a central element of grievances surrounding the exploitation of natural resources which it was argued were needed for Aragon’s own development. From the 1970s onwards *aragonesismo* would become associated with the defence of rights such as linguistic rights, the right to self determination and the right to equal treatment with other peoples of the Spanish state. With the emergence of two *aragonesista* political parties PAR and CHA in the 1970s and 1980s *aragonesismo* took on a more political aspect with these parties seeking to defend and further the interests of the territory they represent and ensure a higher degree of self-government or autonomy and defend its resources against outside exploitation and environmental degradation, the Ebro once again being an intrinsic part of this.

Clearly, the use of the terms *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism is subject to some degree of ambiguity with the terms *aragonesismo politico* and *nacionalismo aragonés* sometimes used in an interchangeable way especially in relation to the period 1917-1936 and by the PAR’s first president Hipólito Gómez de las Rocas. Whilst all nationalists could be described as *aragonesistas*, clearly it is possible to be *aragonesista* without being nationalist. The groups that can be termed *aragonesista* that will be studied in the following chapters are diverse which in turn affects how

⁵³ Interview with Eloy Fernández Clemente. See p. 15.

⁵⁴ Interview with Emilio Eiroa. See p. 15.

they view and prioritise the Ebro as either an economic resource, a patrimonial asset, an element of Aragonese identity. As will be shown the left-right split of political *aragonesismo* in the period from the 1970s onwards also adds to this diversity and presents two ways of viewing the Ebro. This will be examined in depth in Chapters 6 and 7.

CHAPTER 4 THE USE OF THE EBRO BY ARAGON'S EARLY NATIONALIST FORMATION

*'With time, the Ebro will be
a magazine of struggle that will be quoted.
In it there is a whole doctrine, a whole
idea, all of a reborn Aragon.*

*There will remain engraved in these pages the
complete nationalism of the Patria of the
Aragonese.'*¹ Gaspar Torrente

Introduction

The fact that the early *aragonesista*/nationalist group in Barcelona was small in size and located outside its territory meant that the work of transmitting its ideas by means of its press was of fundamental importance.² The most important publication which ran for 190 editions from 1917 to 1936, *El Ebro*, was edited and published in Barcelona although its aim was to reach all Aragonese. *El Ebro* commenced publication at the end of 1917 and with the exception of one year, 1918, was produced fortnightly or monthly until 1933. The autonomist Congress of Caspe in 1936 resulted in the production of a one off edition.³ It had a circulation in Aragon and other regions of the peninsula, with the latter most likely to have focused on other Aragonese emigration groups and like minded regionalist and nationalist groups in other parts of Spain.⁴ In addition to material produced by the Barcelona group articles for publication in *El Ebro* came from contributors within Aragon, mainly Zaragoza, Huesca, Graus and to a lesser extent Benabarre, Campo, Boltaña, Tamarite, Alcañiz, Calaceite, Valdeatorrada, Fabara, Castelserás and outside Aragon, Madrid, Palma (Majorca), Valencia, Haro

¹ Extract from a text *Reaparición* written by Gaspar Torrente and published on the eve of the Congress of Caspe in May 1936 marking the reappearance of *El Ebro* after an absence of 3 years, *El Ebro*, No. 189, May 1936.

² The early *aragonesistas* in Barcelona are sometimes referred to as a movement and sometimes a group. Whilst it was more than a group, drawing on collaborators beyond its nucleus in Barcelona and having a circulation for its magazine in Aragon, it was not 'mass' in terms of numbers nor in terms of popular following.

³ The final edition, No. 190, can only be found in the collection in the Biblioteca de Catalunya. Reproduced in Carlos Serrano and Antonio Peiró, 'Historia de un sentimiento', *El Periódico*, Supplement, 9 July 2006, pp. 2-10.

⁴ The Unión Regionalista Andaluza and the Unión Valencianista Regional like the Unión Regionalista Aragonesa were created in December 1917.

(La Rioja).⁵ *El Ebro* was edited by Isidro Comas Macarulla 1917-1918, Julio Calvo Alfaro 1919-1920 being replaced during a period in England and Ireland by Comas, 1920-1921 by Mariano García Colas followed by Gaspar Torrente, 1921-1924, Calvo Alfaro and 1925-1932 and its final year 1936 by Isidro Comas. In addition to *El Ebro*, Gaspar Torrente was also closely involved with *El Ideal de Aragón* (1930-1932) and *Renacimiento Aragonés* (1935-1936), both published in Aragon.

In its first phase, 15 December 1917 to February 1918, *El Ebro* was published monthly and edited by Isidro Comas Macarulla, one of the founders and first president of URA. In the first edition, the URA defined itself as a group of Aragonese patriots resident in Catalonia, in close contact with members of an entity bearing the same name in Zaragoza, whose aim was to free their land from caciquism, 'resurrect' Aragon and its distinct personality and identity and seek autonomy. It was no coincidence that the publication should be named after Aragon's principal river, for they viewed the river Ebro as the 'father-figure and life-giver to their land/territory, Aragon. The reason for this choice of name for their magazine, which served as a lynch-pin and important vehicle for the discussion, formulation and transmission of their embryonic nationalist ideology and in their efforts to revive awareness of Aragonese history and culture, is clearly set out in the Editorial of the first edition on 15 December 1917:

We have named our magazine *El Ebro* because this river is the father of our nationality and its waters fertilise our land and give food and drink to half of Aragon...We hope that the material *Ebro* corresponds with this spiritual river. That one comes out of the interior of our land; the other comes out of the depths of our flesh and our being. The fluvial Ebro irrigates our fields, and the journalistic *Ebro* comes to water our souls.⁶

After a short break in 1918, *El Ebro* reappeared in January 1919 on a fortnightly basis with Calvo Alfaro as its editor and with regular contributions from leading figures in the group, Gaspar Torrente, Isidro Comas, Matías Pallarés and M.

⁵ See Valeriano C. Labara Ballestar, *Isidro Comas, Almogávar. La poética vida de un aragonés de Tamarite de Litera* (Zaragoza: Rolde de Estudios Aragoneses, 2008), pp. 73-5.

⁶ Editorial, *El Ebro*, 15 December, 1917, p. 1.

García Colás and a number of well-known regionalist figures within Aragon.⁷ Under Calvo Alfaro's editorships *El Ebro* retained its veneration of the river Ebro, as demonstrated by several poems written predominantly by him, which have been largely ignored by later scholars, and by the following evocative reference:

The Ebro speaks to us in these times with the symbolism of a poem. It is our river, the river that we have used as a substantive to the point of creating in it regional prestige. It is the river of our popular hymns and our basic feelings. We wish that on being reborn it fertilises the wildernesses and peoples the deserts. We wish it were an avalanche of life and that on passing through the sleeping furrows of our agonised spirituality, it should do this like a new redeemer of Aragonese birth that should murmur in our land: rise up and walk.⁸

On the occasion of the 100th edition of *El Ebro* in July 1925 Ángel Samblancat explained that the magazine carried the grand fluvial name, because 'rivers are the fathers of nations and civilisations... [and] the veins, blood and circulatory flow of the peoples.'⁹ Before focusing on the Ebro he listed other examples such as the Nile, Euphrates, Ganges, Thames, Seine, Tiber and Rhine.

How the Ebro was viewed in *El Ebro*

The language of *El Ebro* is primarily regenerationist, populist, religious, and focuses on the need for redemption, all of which influenced the way in which the Ebro was portrayed. In addition to the predominant influence of regenerationism, Aragon being the centre of the Regenerationist movement and the group's icon Joaquín Costa one of its leading figures, it is also possible to detect influences of Romanticism, Herderian concepts of organic and cultural nationhood together with a degree of influence of the ideas of the Generation of 1898 and their manipulation of Castile as the 'soul' of the Spanish empire believing landscape to be intimately related to Spanish national and cultural identity, transposed to an Aragonese context. The Generation of 1898 promulgated the notion of Castile

⁷ *El Ebro* received contributions from within Aragon from regionalist figures such as A. Giménez Soler, Manuel Marraco, M. Sanchez Ventura, J. Moneva y Puyol, Domingo Mairal, Salvador Minguijón, Silvio Kossti, Felipe Alaiz, Ricardo del Arco, J. Pío Membrado, General Forniés Calvo.

⁸ Editorial, *El Ebro*, 20 January, 1919, p. 1.

⁹ Ángel Samblancat, 'Baturros de hierro', *El Ebro*, No. 101, July, 1925, p. 7.

and its landscape as the reference point for the whole of Spain, with the implication that Castile and Castilian landscape alone should be the focal point of definitions of Spanish identity. This landscape connection is particularly evident in the works of Antonio Machado and Miguel de Unamuno.¹⁰ As Steven L. Driever points out, 'Machado showed that landscapes can be an inexhaustible provision for others who make bold to embark on regenerating the cultures of their places and times.'¹¹ The Generation of 1898's use of the Castilian landscape raises the question of whether claims by early twentieth century regional movements that their community's identity and distinctiveness were determined by landscape and natural features peculiar to their territory were a reaction to the assertions of the Generation of 1898 that Castile and Castilian landscape alone should define national identity, unity and regeneration or did the Generation of 1898 simply awaken a realisation that what was applicable on a macro-scale could also be applicable on a micro-scale. In addition to the influence of the ideas of the Generation of 1898, Costa had also been a teacher at the Institución Libre de Enseñanza in Madrid where Krausian ideas on organicism and the relationship between landscape and man were the subject of much debate. These ideas, transmitted to Aragon on his return and through his writings, are evident in the early nationalist movement's thinking on natural features of their territory, namely the river Ebro.

Against this backcloth analysis of references to the Ebro in the group's press shows that they perceived it in a dual way. Firstly, there was a symbolic aspect which regarded it in an organic, primordial way as a father-figure and life-giver with the emphasis falling specifically on the river. Secondly, there was a strong regenerationist aspect which on the one hand viewed it in a biblical, *costista* way as redemption and on the other in an economic sense as irrigation and present and future economic development, which they believed would be brought about by works to regulate and canalise it and its tributaries under the auspices of the newly created Confederación Hidrográfica del Ebro (CHE).

¹⁰ See for instance Steven L. Driever, 'The Signification of Sorian Landscapes in Antonio Machado's *Campos de Castilla*', *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* (1997), 4,1, 43-70 and H. Ramsden, *The Spanish 'Generation of 1898'* (Manchester: John Rylands Library, 1974).

¹¹ Driever, p. 67.

How the Ebro was perceived and represented in *El Ebro* can be divided into five main categories. These are firstly, as a primordial father-figure, life-giver and life-sustaining force; secondly, as the central element of homeland and the memory of homeland; thirdly, as an integral element of ethno-symbolic memory. Fourthly, as ‘redemption’, economic prestige and development and the central element in an emerging sense of economic regionalism and nationalism. Fifthly, as Aragon’s exit to the sea. In addition, it is the central feature of a number of poems, used to explore aspects such as water being lost to the sea, the aspiration for an outlet to the Mediterranean and the link with other symbols of Aragon such as the Virgin of Pilar. These poems will be considered separately, although themes from them will be extrapolated into the above categories.

Firstly, throughout *El Ebro* the Ebro is perceived as a primordial father-figure, life-giver and life-sustaining force. It is portrayed in physical symbolism as the blood and main artery of Aragon and in a spiritual sense as its natural soul. In addition to the life-sustaining aspect it is seen as the father of the Aragonese race or ethnic group and in the wider context as the father of the whole peninsula. In the Editorial of the first edition of *El Ebro* the early *aragonesistas* perception of the Ebro as a life-giving and life-sustaining father-figure, as set out in their explanation for their choice of name for their magazine, encompasses a primordial interpretation of the life-giving and life sustaining significance of a territory’s natural elements and environment.¹² As Steven Grosby points out territory ‘sustains biologically the life of the individual and the life of that individual’s collectivity by providing the necessary physical nutrients’.¹³ For the *aragonesista* group in Barcelona the Ebro is the personification of the father-figure and life-giver as demonstrated by the Editorial and in Ángel Samblancat’s later assertion that rivers are the fathers of nations and civilizations.¹⁴ In addition to physical sustenance, territoriality also sustains life by providing the locus of memories associated with a particular territory. This aspect is considered in more depth later in relation to the Ebro as a symbol of homeland and ethno-symbolic memory.

¹² See Editorial, *El Ebro*, 15 December, 1917, p. 1.

¹³ Grosby, pp. 150, 158.

¹⁴ Samblancat, ‘Baturros de hierro’, *El Ebro*, No. 101, July, 1925, p. 7.

The Ebro is also portrayed in a primordial manner, as the most important physical element of life, the blood and main artery of Aragon, and in a spiritual sense as the natural soul of it and its people:

EBRO

Magical word, at whose incantation blossoms in my mind...I'm on speaking terms with the Ebro, our river, one of the most voluminous in the Peninsula. It is the *vein* of Aragon.

The Ebro... is the blood of Aragon.¹⁵

'The *Pilarica*' is the soul of the Aragonese people poured into religion, like the 'Jota' is the soul in the lyrics of the people and the 'Ebro' is the same soul in the eternal voice of nature.¹⁶

Also, in Samblancat's 100th edition tribute to the magazine rivers are portrayed as the veins, blood and circulatory flow of the nations and peoples that lived on their banks.¹⁷ The Ebro as the blood of Aragon is a theme that would resurface in the period from the mid 1970s in the context of opposition to water transfers, finding written expression, for instance, in Lisón where water transfer is compared to vampirism and in an article by Sebastián Lorente where it is likened to a transfusion.¹⁸ Similarly, the linking of the Ebro, the Virgin of Pilar and the jota would also re-emerge in the more conservative *aragonesismo* of the PAR and also survive in certain branches of the more right-wing orientated media such as Aragon's main daily newspaper *Heraldo*. However, it would be absent in and left-wing *aragonesismo* and nationalism and the later left-wing nationalism of the CHA.

In addition to its life-giving role as a father the Ebro is also portrayed in an ethnic context as the father of the Aragonese 'race'; the concept of 'raza' being what we today would refer to as ethnicity. In this conceptualisation the Ebro is seen as the

¹⁵ M. Baselga y Jordan, 'Tortosa y Aragón', *El Ebro*, No. 56, p. 8.

¹⁶ Julio Calvo Alfaro, 'La Virgen de Aragón', *El Ebro*, No. 11, 5 July 1919, p. 1-2.

¹⁷ Samblancat, 'Baturros de hierro', *El Ebro*, No. 101 July 1925, p. 7.

¹⁸ José C Lisón, *Cultura e identidad en la provincia de Huesca: una perspectiva desde la antropología social* (Zaragoza: Caja de Ahorros de la Inmaculada, 1986) p. 259 and Jesús J. Sebastián Lorente, 'El país aragonés. Una colonia del Estado español', *Siete de Aragón*, No. 140, 7-11 February 1997, p. 12.

father of the Aragonese ethnic group and in the wider context as the father of the whole peninsula. The latter is not regarded as detracting from its symbolic importance for Aragon, but rather places Aragon at the heart of the symbol that has given its name to the whole of a peninsula. There is a sense of pride in the Ebro giving its name to the whole peninsula.¹⁹ The Ebro is, therefore, characteristic of *aragonesismo* without ceasing to have roots and links with *lo ibérico* in general, with the Iberian Peninsula, with the Iberian countries and with Iberian languages. The implication is that because of the Ebro's immense power and importance it was readily adopted by others. This is reinforced by references to Costa's vision of the Ebro as the cradle of Aragonese nationality and of Aragon as an example to the rest of Spain due to the early development of its parliamentary and legal systems.²⁰ In *Canto al Ebro* 'the ancient history of the glorious river' as *padre de raza* (father of the race) of the 'tribe' that lived on its banks and as the immortal soul of this ethnic group is set out as follows:

Save, oh sacred Ebro! Invincible and generous father of the race that you grouped together on your banks a tribe that gave you its name and in exchange you made the tribe an immortal nation; you cross Spain and on your route you infuse your generous wisdom to a thousand peoples. I have venerated you at the foot of the blessed Pilar; I have seen how you glide along between exuberant banks in Aragon and Catalonia, thanks to your vital wisdom; you have come together in a symbolic embrace with the Latin sea in the marshy delta of your outlet to the sea, and I have placed my shotgun to one side in order to wet my hands in your waters, which bring me a memory of blessed Pilar, of beloved Zaragoza, of Aragon and I have blessed you, deeply moved... Did I doubt that you have a soul?...! No! Your soul, oh river, is the immortal soul of the Race!²¹

In further exaltations the Ebro is seen as the spirit of the Aragonese race, 'God look after you, Father Ebro, with turbulent and fierce waters like the spirit of our race' and the embodiment of the fundamental elements of patria, 'Father Ebro: You embody the three basic and fundamental elements of our Patria. You are

¹⁹ Examples of references to pride in the Ebro giving its name to the whole peninsula include Matias Pallarés Gil, 'Iberia', *El Ebro*, No. 1, 15 December 1917, p. 6; Samblancat, 'Baturros de hierro', *El Ebro*, No. 101, July 1925, p. 7 and Rafael Esteban, 'Trabaja, viejo Ebro', *El Ebro*, No. 138, November 1928.

²⁰ Joaquín Costa, 'El Río Ebro, cuna y centro de la nacionalidad aragonesa', *El Ebro*, No. 26, 20 March, 1920, p. 6.

²¹ Unknown autor, 'Canto al Ebro', *El Ebro*, No. 161, October 1930, p. 10.

Race, you are History and you are Faith.’²² Its current is also seen as symbolising ‘the dream of Patria.’²³ Here the concept of *patria* has a semantic root of ‘land of our fathers’ and is thus related to genealogy, ancestors, martyrs, heroes and historic achievements. The suggestion is, therefore, that the Ebro embodies and personifies all of these aspects.

As the quotations in this section and the first edition of *El Ebro* demonstrate, the river Ebro was regarded by the early *aragonesistas* as the father of Aragonese nationality and a life-giver in a spiritual and physical sense, giving life as a father does and sustaining it thereafter. Significantly, however, there is recognition in the first Editorial that the Ebro affords food and drink to ‘half-of Aragon’ which from the point of view of its promulgation as a symbol of the whole of Aragon has inherent weaknesses, although regulation and irrigation schemes could afford the possibility of extending its benefits a little wider. In this period the possible benefits afforded by irrigation schemes were viewed only with optimism, having not yet experienced the detrimental effects that the large-scale regulation works necessary to facilitate further irrigation would have on the mountain area as a result of the flooding of valleys for reservoirs, forced appropriation of land and properties in the 1960s and 1970s and displacement of population, abandoned villages and loss of potential development land on the valley floor.

The positioning of the Ebro statement in such a prime location in the first edition of the magazine indicates that this theme occupied a central position in the thinking of the group. However, whilst reference to the Ebro remains consistent throughout the life of the publication, history and figures such as Costa, Lanuza and Goya subsequently take on the role of major protagonists for a number of reasons. Firstly, they afford a high degree of prestige, especially Costa and history, to a group which in its early stages needed to legitimise its existence.²⁴ Secondly, unlike the Galician movement whose founding father, Ramón Otero Pedrayo, had a keen interest in geography this was not so in the case of the *aragonesista* group in Barcelona. Galician intellectuals of the same period, such

²² Rene Llanas de Niubo, ‘Canto al Ebro’, *El Ebro*, No. 59, 20 September 1921.

²³ Rafael Esteban, ‘Trabaja, viejo Ebro’, *El Ebro*, No 138, November 1928, p. 11.

²⁴ See Serrano, ‘Los mitos aragonesistas’, pp. 67, 72.

as the *Xeneración Nós* developed on the landscape-cultural identity aspect of their nationalism, whilst in the Aragonese case this link remained largely underdeveloped.²⁵ Geography has two roles in relation to nationalism: as the physical land of a particular people and as the discipline of geography. In cases such as Galicia and Wales both played a significant role in the construction of a sense of national identity, of ‘Galleguism’ and ‘Welshness’.²⁶ In the case of Aragon only the Zaragoza historian Andrés Jiménez Soler demonstrated an interest in this aspect.

Secondly, the Ebro is viewed as the central element of homeland and the memory of homeland providing a locus of memories associated with a particular territory. Attachment to a homeland and its physical aspects is an integral part of all nationalist thinking and one frequently explored by philosophers and theorists of nationalism. Early Romantic nationalist philosophers such as Herder and Fichte viewed nations as primordial, organic outgrowths of nature arguing that the affinity of a people with their natural environment was an important determinant of ‘national character’.

Both primordialist and ethno-symbolist interpretations of the connection between nature and group life operate within the general terms of territoriality and homeland. Natural features such as rivers have been shown to link a community to a homeland, a highly significant element in any nationalist discourse. Stephen Grosby cites the ancient Egyptian belief that their nation belonged to ‘the land of the Nile’ as an example of this land: people relationship in which the land in this case is characterised by its river which overflows, deposits silt on the land and therefore creates fertility.²⁷ The land: people relationship is often described as a symbiosis between a certain piece of earth and ‘its’ community.²⁸ In the case of the early Aragonese nationalist movement the relationship was that of a life-

²⁵ See for instance Craig Patterson, ‘Galician Cultural Identity in the Works of Ramón Otero Pedrayo (1888-1976)’, (Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Oxford, 2002), p. 44 and Craig Patterson, ‘Landscape, Philosophy and Identity: A Galician Response to the Legacy of 1898’, *Galician Review*, 2 (1998), 62-72 (p. 62).

²⁶ See Patterson, ‘Galician Cultural Identity’, Pyrs Gruffudd, ‘Remaking Wales: Nation-Building and the Geographical Imagination, 1925-1950’, *Political Geography*, Vol. 14. 3 (1995), 219-39 (pp. 219-20, 224) and Gruffudd, ‘Landscape and Nationhood’, p. 154.

²⁷ Guibernau and Hutchinson, *Understanding Nationalism*, p. 17.

²⁸ Smith, *Ethnic Origins*, p. 28.

giving, patriarchal relationship with *Padre Ebro* (Father Ebro) which often goes so far as a god-like representation of the Ebro as demonstrated in Calvo Alfaro's poem *Padre Ebro*.²⁹

For the Barcelona group homeland had another aspect, the memory of homeland. The importance which it placed on the river Ebro reflects the need for members of a nationalist group operating outside their territory to identify with a powerful symbol of their homeland in order to counteract a possible loss of identity as a result of being away from their birthplace. The emigrant's memory of homeland often centres on memory of an outstanding feature, such as a river or mountain, and the creation of myths and imagery around it. There are many theories relating to memory and to the process of selecting some aspects and forgetting others. Edward Said argues that anyone catapulted out of his or her native place is likely to be hyperconscious of place and belonging.³⁰ V. S. Naipaul has also shown how the exile can approach a landscape from which he has been separated or never known with heightened historical intelligence and romantic feeling whilst the native can betray, nonchalantly, a landscape he has known all his life.³¹ Hooson argues that when people have emigrated or been exiled from their homeland and have formed groups or communities elsewhere the land remains imprinted in their collective memory as 'poetic landscape'.³² Emigrants, like the Barcelona group, are frequently important for nationalist movements, as demonstrated by Canarians in Cuba and Venezuela and Irish in America. Smith maintains that *ethnies* do not cease to be *ethnies* when people are dispersed or have lost their homeland, 'for ethnicity is a matter of myths, memories, values and symbols.'³³ As the writer of *Canto al Ebro* remarks the water of the Ebro brings memories of el Pilar, Zaragoza and Aragon.³⁴

In addition, the Ebro was important for the Barcelona group as a physical link uniting their homeland with their actual residence, Catalonia, and providing links

²⁹ Julio Calvo Alfaro, 'Ebro Padre', *El Ebro*, No 79, April 1923, p. 4.

³⁰ Cited by Joan Cocks, *Passion and Paradox: Intellectuals Confront the National Question* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2002), p. 13.

³¹ Cited by Cocks, p. 150.

³² Hooson, 'Introduction'.

³³ Smith, *Ethnic Origins*, p. 28.

³⁴ Unknown author, 'Canto al Ebro,' *El Ebro*, No. 161, Oct 1930, p. 10.

with other territories. As regards the link between their homeland and actual place of residence Valeriano Labara attributes the origins of this idea to Jiménez Soler, and taken up by Isidro Comas and the early *aragonesistas*.³⁵ As well as the physical link with Aragon the Ebro provides a link with another powerful symbol of their homeland, *el Pilar*, ‘kissing’ it as it passes on its way to Catalonia and indicating the route the Aragonese in Catalonia must follow to ‘restore their personality’:

Toast the Ebro that is born in the Cantabrian mountains and unites in a harmonious link Castile, Aragon, Navarra and Catalonia along the Ebro, which after kissing the sacred *el Pilar*, symbol of our history, penetrates through Catalan lands, in this way showing us the road that we must follow to restore our personality.³⁶

Thirdly, the Ebro was an integral element of ethno-symbolic myths, symbols, history and collective memory. For ethno-symbolists such as Smith symbols of territory and community are a key component of ethnicity and natural elements, such as rivers and mountains, are frequently accorded a key role by nationalists in the representation of the qualities of the nation and its essence and as repositories of collective memories. Smith argues that natural features can delimit and locate a community in the landscape by recalling symbolic crises, dramatic events or turning points in the history of the community.³⁷ As we have seen ethno-symbolists such as Smith and Williams argue that the identity of a nation is bound up with memory and this memory is rooted in a homeland with its mountains being sacred and its rivers are full of memories.³⁸

The *aragonesistas* in Barcelona placed considerable emphasis on the use of ‘myths’ to put across their message. In contrast to the ethno-symbolist interpretation Carlos Serrano puts forward a more pragmatic explanation of their use of ‘myths’ arguing it stemmed from the fact that whilst the early nationalists had two outstanding intellectuals in Torrente and Calvo Alfaro, they lacked a fully formulated political doctrine capable of influencing feelings in Aragon.

³⁵ Labara Ballestar, p. 70.

³⁶ Unknown autor, ‘Brindo por el Ebro’, *El Ebro*, No. 3, February 1918, p. 11.

³⁷ Smith, *Ethnic Origins*, p. 188.

³⁸ Williams and Smith, ‘National Construction’, p. 509.

Consequently, it was necessary to fill this gap with myths.³⁹ These myths centred on two aspects which were significant to Aragon. On the one hand, there was the historical aspect which emphasised Aragon's prestigious past, its history as an independent state, and its role as a legislative and legal model based on the parliamentarianism of its Cortes, the laws of its *Justicia* and its ancient Foral Laws.⁴⁰ On the other, there was a more immediate aspect centred on Costa and water resources, of which the Ebro was an integral part. As Mainer points out, 'those who wrote for *El Ebro* brought to life immediate tradition and in this the name of Joaquín Costa was transformed into a myth'.⁴¹

This immediate aspect was based on the 'myth' of a hydrological utopia and economic revival that would be brought about as a result of Costa's proposals for increased irrigated agricultural land not only in Aragon, but throughout Spain. In relation to Aragon, where agrarianism and demands for a water policy were the essence of the regionalist consciousness, hopes of a revival centred on increased irrigation and the Ebro touched a chord not only with the nationalists in Barcelona but also amongst regionalists in Aragon. As Serrano's research into the *aragonesista* treatment of water and territory in the twentieth century shows, these elements played an important role in the promotion of *lo aragonés* in this period.⁴² Costa's association with water policy and his Aragonese origins made him a prime candidate for 'mythification' by the Barcelona group. References to him in *El Ebro* are abundant and more than simple allusions, as demonstrated by the assertion in the Manifesto of the UA, 'we have the ideology of Costa'.⁴³ In addition, Torrente referred to him as, 'the most important figure who embodies our ideals and who best defines Aragonese nationality, although he would not end up being a conscious nationalist'.⁴⁴

³⁹ Serrano, 'El nacionalismo aragonés', p. 87.

⁴⁰ Serrano, 'El nacionalismo aragonés', p. 85. See also Mainer, 'El aragonesismo político: recuerdos del Ebro', p. 8.

⁴¹ Mainer, 'El aragonesismo político: recuerdos de El Ebro', p. 9.

⁴² Serrano, 'El aragonesismo costista', p. 12.

⁴³ See M. García and Julio Calvo Alfaro, 'Manifiesto de la Unión Aragonesista', *El Ebro* No 145, June 1929.

⁴⁴ Gaspar Torrente cited by Serrano, 'Joaquín Costa mito aragonesista', *Siete de Aragón*, 17-23 February 1995, pp. 26-27, p. 27.

Serrano's studies show that Costa was used by the early *aragonesista* group in a variety of ways. Firstly, to consolidate an Aragonese identity that could not be encapsulated in a more coherent way because of the lack of a consistent theoretical base. Secondly, as a means of transmitting earlier myths and legitimising supposed realities.⁴⁵ These included the 'myth' of Aragon as a cradle of liberties and a role-model in social questions and common law and the perception of the Ebro as the generator of Aragonese life and thirdly, to bring prestige and justification for their ideology and legitimise their movement by presenting an acceptable image of it to outsiders as a result of its association with such a prestigious figure. This mythification of Costa by the *aragonesista* group in Barcelona also brought to the foreground the Ebro and irrigation and placed the Ebro at the centre of Aragonese nationality through frequent mention of Costa's reference to the Ebro as the 'cradle and centre of the Aragonese nationality'; it highlighted it as a constant and central element in the history of Aragon by use on various occasions of a quotation from Costa's *Política Hidráulica* where he mapped out the importance of the Ebro over the course of Aragon's history and, finally, it cast it as a source of redemption and promise in line with the regenerationist ideas put forward by Costa.

In his studies of Costa and water Mairal argues that Costa was the creator of a symbolism represented in water rather than the Ebro and that he created a juxtaposition of water and land, a very dry, arid land that needs water. He highlights the fact that Costa's narrative is based mainly in the Bible, with frequent reference to the Book of Exodus.⁴⁶ He points to the story of how the Israelis went through the desert to God's Promised Land and to a matrix of symbolism used to create a representation of the Aragonese people living in a dry, arid land which needs to be renewed by water. In Costa's representation the Ebro is part of this discourse but it is water in general, the use of water to irrigate the land that is the symbolic *desencadenante* (something that triggers or unleashes a reaction). He refers to this as *irredentismo* and argues that Aragonese irredentism gave rise to the idea that the Aragonese live in a land that needs to be redeemed by

⁴⁵ Serrano, 'Los mitos aragonesistas', p. 67.

⁴⁶ Interview with Gaspar Mairal, 27 November 2006, Zaragoza.

water.⁴⁷ Moreover, he argues that Costa frequently refers to the river Ésera, as the water for irrigation, for the most part, does not come from the Ebro but from the tributaries that flow into it, the Ebro being a name for the whole basin.

However, the use of the Ebro by the early nationalist group differed from Costa's focus on water in general in that the river Ebro was singled out as the 'redeemer' or 'redemption', particularly in writings by Calvo Alfaro and in references to the benefits that regulation of the Ebro would provide⁴⁸. In *Mare Nostrum*, Calvo Alfaro wrote:

The Ebro will soon redeem us from the dryness of the countryside. It is a patriotic and harmonious river with the aroma of Aragonese prospects and yearnings. The Ebro is our river as the Mediterranean is our sea.⁴⁹

In *El Ebro está llamando* he also refers specifically to the Ebro as redemption:

Awake, awake as it is now daybreak;
The Ebro is redemption
And harmonious passion
So that everything is lit up and everything grows.⁵⁰

Finally, in an Editorial entitled *Aragoneses* the writer(s) express the wish that the Ebro should act like a new redeemer and bring about an Aragonese spiritual (re)birth:

We wish it were an avalanche of life and that on passing through the sleeping furrows of our agonised spirituality, it should do this like a new redeemer of Aragonese birth that should murmur in our land: rise up and walk.⁵¹

⁴⁷ Mairal's definition of irredentism does not follow the usual definition of the term as a doctrine which advocates the recovery of territory culturally or historically related to one's nation but now subject to a foreign government. He refers to Aragonese irredentism as the idea that the Aragonese live in a land that needs to be redeemed by water. Aragonese irredentism is based on a consciousness of poverty, backwardness and prostration that has forced large numbers of its population to emigrate and a conceptualisation of Aragon as a territory that needs to be redeemed. It coincided with a doctrine which became prevalent in Aragon after the death of Joaquín Costa in 1911, '*costismo*', which advocated redemption through water and irrigation projects.

⁴⁸ See for instance Joaquín Morales, 'La ruta de Ebro, vida de Aragón', *El Ebro*, No. 108, April 1926, p. 1.

⁴⁹ Julio Calvo Alfaro, 'Mare Nostrum', *El Ebro*, No. 33, 1920, p. 5.

⁵⁰ Julio Calvo Alfaro, 'El Ebro está llamando', *El Ebro*, No. 109, 1926, p. 4.

⁵¹ 'Aragoneses', Editorial, *El Ebro*, 20 January, 1919, p. 1.

As we have seen in relation to the myths created around Costa and hydrological aspirations the early *aragonesista* group linked the Ebro with other powerful symbols of Aragon namely Costa, the Virgin of Pilar, Aragon's history and its institutions. In the poem *La Virgen y el Río* there are references to the Ebro's platonic relationship with the Virgin of Pilar and to it 'kissing' *el Pilar* as it passes by. In addition, the Ebro is afforded the status of Aragon's natural soul with *el Pilar* as its religious soul and the *jota* its lyrical soul. Significantly, the Ebro is itself the main subject of many *jotas*. There are also attempts by the group to link the Ebro with two other powerful symbols of Aragon, its history and its institutions, through frequent incorporation in articles in *El Ebro* of lengthy quotations from Costa's *Política Hidráulica*, where he maps out the importance of the Ebro over the course of Aragon's history, and the quotation where he refers to the Ebro as the cradle of Aragonese nationality and an example to the rest of Spain. Costa's reference to the Ebro as the cradle of Aragonese nationality is frequently cited not only in *El Ebro* but also in other examples of the early *aragonesista* press such as, *Renacimiento Aragonés* and *El Ideal de Aragon*.⁵² In the *Política Hidráulica* quotation, which focuses on the Ebro as a constant and central element in the history of Aragon, Costa expands on the earlier example of it as the cradle of Aragonese nationality and example to the rest of Spain by highlighting the importance of the parliamentary system and *Cortes* that originated on banks before any other in Europe:

History has to classify the Ebro amongst the great civilised rivers, alongside the Euphrates, Nile, Tiber, Thames and the Seine. It is the most voluminous of the peninsula; it has a delta like the Nile and a glorious history like the Tiber, it is navigable like London's Thames and Paris' Seine..., the parliamentary system was born on its banks, joining together with the Cortes before any other European people; on whose banks the origin and development of modern international law took place, with Pedro I and Fernando II, and from which also departed, not as the small jewel of the Catholic kingdom, like a crier the legend, the money that Columbus needed to discover America...; crossing all of the climates, born in a region of perpetual snow and dying in the region of the palm and the orange, to one extreme it has the landscape of el Puerto, to the other the port of San Carlos de la

⁵² Joaquín Costa, 'El río Ebro, cuna y centro de la nacionalidad aragonesa', *El Ebro*, No. 26, 20 March, 1920, p. 6.

Rápida, two of the best ports in Europe, and at the source and estuary of the river of the two most laborious races of the Peninsula, the Vascongada, representative of tradition, and the Catalan race, representative of progress, and in the centre Zaragoza, with its marvellous fertile plain, created artificially in the middle of the most sterile of the five Spanish steppes, as if to demonstrate what the creative virtue of water is capable of; and there, in one of its squares the statue of Pignatelli, to whose miraculous tenacity the Imperial Canal owed its existence, as if to demonstrate what the will of man is capable of, when man has faith and is Aragonese; and at the opposite extreme of the steppe, the plains embraced by the Somontano and the Litera, awaiting with the same yearning as...⁵³

Thus, the use in articles in *El Ebro* of quotations from Costa referring to the Ebro serves admirably not only to link the Ebro with this iconic figure but also with Aragon's history and the development of its institutions on its banks.⁵⁴ As Guibernau points out 'the myths, symbols, traditions, heroes and holy places are key components of any nationalist doctrine.'⁵⁵

Fourthly, in addition to its more symbolic aspects the Ebro had a clearly economic aspect in the *aragonesismo* of the early group as a source of economic prestige and development and the central element in an emerging sense of economic regionalism and nationalism. Irrigation and water policy were key features in the *aragonesismo* of the early twentieth century. At the end of the previous century Spain had suffered a number of setbacks. In 1898 it had lost the last remnants of its colonial empire and there was a high level of social unrest, especially in rural areas, due to poverty and conflicts arising out of large disparities in land ownership and caciquism. At this time 60 per cent of the working population of Spain was still involved in agriculture which was characterised by low productivity as a result of poor soils and a structure of land ownership which hampered innovation.⁵⁶ For Costa and the Regeneration movement state financed irrigation schemes were seen as the only way to overcome social and economic

⁵³ Joaquín Costa, *Política Hidráulica* cited in 'Palabras de Costa', *El Ebro*, No. 165, February, 1931, p. 5.

⁵⁴ The *Política Hidráulica* quotation, for instance, is used in Joaquín Costa, 'El río Ebro, cuna y centro de la nacionalidad aragonesa', *El Ebro*, No. 26, March 1920, p. 6; Joaquín Morales, 'La ruta de Ebro, vida de Aragón', *El Ebro*, No. 108, April 1926, p. 1; 'Palabras de Costa', *El Ebro*, No. 165, February 1931, p. 5.

⁵⁵ Guibernau, 'Anthony D. Smith', p. 127.

⁵⁶ Del Moral, Leandro and David Saurí, 'Changing Course: Water Policy in Spain', *Environment*, 6.41, (1999), 12-36 (p. 13).

problems and regenerate Spain. According to Costa, water policy had become the expression of ‘all the economic policy that the nation must follow to redeem itself’.⁵⁷ Political and social pressures brought to bear by Costa and the Regenerationist movement resulted in the Plan Nacional de Obras Hidráulicas of 1902 which aimed to irrigate 1.5 million hectares of land through the construction of 205 large hydraulic infrastructure projects. However, owing to technical, financial and political difficulties only 150,000 hectares were put under irrigation by 1925.⁵⁸

It may seem paradoxical that a movement whose focus was Aragon should take as its icon a figure who sought to redress the social and economic problems of Spain as a whole. This was due to two factors. Firstly, Costa was Aragonese and conceptualised his doctrine in Aragon, especially the part relating to the redemption of the nation, through agriculture and water policy. In *Política hidráulica* and *La fórmula de la agricultura española* for instance, there are constant references to Aragon and *lo aragones*.⁵⁹ Secondly, after his death in 1911 the idea became enshrined in the *aragonesismo* of the day that Costa would have been able to direct an economic recovery for Spain and then for Aragon.⁶⁰ After his death the Aragonese prevented his body being taken to Madrid and he was laid to rest in Zaragoza, with thirty thousand Zaragozans filing through the chapel, a clear demonstration that he was an essential part of popular *aragonesismo*.⁶¹

In line with the prevailing spirit of regenerationism the potential afforded by the Ebro for further irrigation schemes was viewed with great optimism by the early *aragonesista* group. Irrigation, based on a model of hydrological infrastructures to create more irrigated agricultural land, canalisation of the Ebro and economic development based primarily in agriculture were a central part of their *aragonesismo*. This can be witnessed by numerous references to these topics in *El Ebro* and other articles and pamphlets published by Calvo Alfaro and Torrente. Their hopes were first placed in the Plan de Riegos de Altoaragón (Upper Aragon

⁵⁷ Cited in Saurí and Del Moral, ‘Recent Developments’, p. 355.

⁵⁸ Del Moral and Saurí, ‘Changing Course’, p. 15.

⁵⁹ Mairal, *La identidad*, p. 82.

⁶⁰ Mainer, ‘El aragonesismo político: recuerdos de El Ebro’, p. 8 and ‘El aragonesismo político’, p. 67.

⁶¹ Mairal and Bergua, *De Joaquín Costa al Pacto del Agua*, p. 14.

Irrigation Plan) approved in 1915, and subsequently in a ‘hydraulic redemption’ that they believed would be brought about by the CHE, set up in 1926. The foundation stone of the Riegos de Altoaragón project, the reservoir of La Peña on the river Gallego, was inaugurated by Rafael Gasset in full Regenerationist spirit in 1901 and it was hoped that once the project was underway and prosperity achieved, ills such as caciquism would come to an end. In 1915, Isidro Comas, one of the founders of the UA wrote, ‘the seed of Costa is bearing fruit in the form of canals and reservoirs, which cost and will cost millions to make water flow through distinct points of the region, transforming the barren lands into orchards’.⁶² In reality, however, the Riegos de Altoaragón project slipped into a languid existence as a result of stops and starts due to political crises and economic difficulties of successive governments. The main problem was dependence on state investment to finance the hydrological constructions necessary to carry out the project. Political instability of the state due to successive regime changes with the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera, Second Republic and period leading up to the Civil War meant that the momentum for investment in new irrigation was limited and plans approved by one regime were not necessarily implemented by another, which led to a sense of grievance amongst those who had placed their hopes in them which would be resurrected in the post Franco period.

Alongside early *aragonesismo*’s adoption of a quasi-biblical perception of the Ebro as redemption typical of the rhetoric of Costa, the incorporation of regenerationist and *costista* concepts and their calls for economic reconstruction and increased irrigation there was also a developing view amongst the *aragonesistas* in Barcelona of the idea that autonomous management of water would be best for the greatest level of economic development. In 1919 the editors of *El Ebro* argue that a high level of regional prestige has been created around their river, the Ebro.⁶³ A few years later, in the period 1926-1936, it is possible to see the emergence of a perception of water and the Ebro as an element of regional development and a means of autonomy in economic terms. This owed much to the

⁶² Isidro Comas, *La Crónica de Aragón* cited by Serrano in ‘El aragonesismo costista’, p. 14.

⁶³ Editorial, Aragoneses, *El Ebro*, 20 January, 1919, p. 1.

creation of the CHE. Such a perception, however, was dramatically cut-short in 1936 by the Civil War and the later Franco Regime.

The creation of the CHE in 1926 during the Primo de Rivera dictatorship was greeted with great optimism as the Confederation was seen as the birth of an opportunity to make use of water resources.⁶⁴ The importance placed on the CHE by the early *aragonesista* group is reflected in the prominent place they gave it in their articles (especially when it was set up or under threat), manifestos and drafts of Statutes and Constitutions for an Aragonese state printed in *El Ebro*. For instance, in the *Manifiesto de la Unión Aragonesista* there is reference to the CHE marking out new horizons for the Aragonese economy and belief in the abilities of those who work for it being able to bring this to fruition.⁶⁵ In the draft clauses of a Statute of Autonomy, published in *El Ebro* in May 1931, there was a call for ‘intensification of irrigation for our dry fields by maintaining the actual Confederación Hidrográfica del Ebro in the most appropriate form for its maximum efficiency ...’⁶⁶

Although a para-state organisation established to manage the whole river basin the CHE was headed by the highly respected Aragonese engineer Lorenzo Pardo and prominent Aragonese regionalists and agrarian figures and it was ‘regarded as an organ of autonomous management which, would be able to solve Aragon’s problems from there with only small concessions to the dictates of Madrid’.⁶⁷ In material terms, in its first five years of existence the CHE invested the same amount of money in irrigation as had been invested in the previous twenty year period and brought ten times more land under irrigation, amounting to 175,000 hectares.⁶⁸ Its importance, however, went beyond its physical successes. It came to be regarded as an element of regional development and became increasingly linked with the possibility of Aragonese autonomy in economic matters. As

⁶⁴ The Confederaciones Hidrográficas were created from 1926 to manage the river basins of Spain’s principal rivers under the control of the Ministerio de Medio Ambiente. The Confederación del Ebro was the first to be set up. In 1932 it was incorporated into the Ministerio de Obras Públicas.

⁶⁵ M. García and Julio Calvo Alfaro, ‘Manifiesto de la Unión Aragonesista’, *El Ebro*, No 145, June 1929.

⁶⁶ Mainer, ‘El aragonesismo político’, p. 69.

⁶⁷ Serrano, ‘El aragonesismo costista’, p. 16.

⁶⁸ Carmen Granell, *Los aragoneses* (Madrid: Istmo, 1977), p. 145.

Serrano argued, between 1926 and 1936 a connection between regionalism, economic interests and water policy became firmly established in Aragon. Thus, when the CHE came under threat as a result of the changing political fortunes of the Primo de Rivera dictatorship and during the Second Republic, its defence was taken up by the *aragonesistas* in Barcelona as a defence of regional interests and of Aragon itself.⁶⁹ In *Aragón*, Estado Calvo Alfaro argued that the CHE ought to be defended by the Aragonese as a matter of life or death, 'it is the backbone of Aragon's vitality and the Aragonese have to draw it close to defend it from the eternal enemy, central power'.⁷⁰ Torrente took this a step further by identifying the defence of the Confederation with the defence of Aragon.⁷¹ In his study of the *aragonesista* treatment of the *agua/tierra* relationship in this period, Serrano argues that the fact that the word '*tierra*' was also synonymous with '*territorio*' gave substance to the idea of a territory whose limits had to be defended.⁷² In the 1920s and early 1930s this defence focused on defence of the CHE and the possibilities it afforded for regional development through increased irrigation schemes. Defence of the CHE was also taken up by a variety of regionalist sectors within Aragon ranging from the conservative bourgeoisie to middle class reformists and republican elements.⁷³ Although their response fell short of the expectations of the Barcelona group, the CHE provided a focal point for the diverse regionalist and nationalist currents and raised the regional consciousness of the bourgeoisie.

The faith and optimism placed in the CHE, set up to administer the whole river basin, marked the beginning of a somewhat contradictory view of the Ebro by *aragonesista* groups which on the one hand regarded it as 'ours' and on the other supported its management on the basis of the river basin as a whole. As we will see in relation to the more recent periods, many of those interviewed argued that when the Aragonese speak of the Ebro it is not the river but the whole river basin that they are referring to. In contrast, however, the focus of the early nationalist movement in Barcelona fell predominantly on the river. There was some use of

⁶⁹ Serrano, 'El aragonesismo costista', pp. 16-18.

⁷⁰ Calvo Alfaro, *Reflexiones sobre Aragón*, p. 5.

⁷¹ Serrano, 'El aragonesismo costista', p. 16.

⁷² Serrano, 'El aragonesismo costista', p. 16.

⁷³ Serrano, 'El aragonesismo costista', p. 18.

the more general term 'water' and examples of articles beginning with a reference to the Ebro and then moving on to talk of 'water' especially for irrigation.⁷⁴ Reference to water in general would become much more prevalent in the post-Franco period than in the early twentieth century.

Fifthly, the early *aragonesistas* view of the Ebro as Aragon's exit to the sea had economic as well as historical and territorial connotations. Access to the sea was an important factor in Aragon's history and the hope of once more having a link to the Mediterranean was an ever present aspiration of the early *aragonesistas*.⁷⁵ There was a strong desire amongst those who wrote in *El Ebro* for Tortosa, the Catalan town and outlet to the sea to be part of Aragonese territory as it had been in medieval times when it was part of the empire ruled by the Corona de Aragon.⁷⁶ *El Ebro* carried out a campaign which promoted the 'Aragoneseness' of Tortosa beginning with an article by Mariano García Colas in November 1919. Later, in 1921 a conference was held by Manuel Lorenzo Pardo in Tortosa and led to the publication of more articles on this theme by García Colas, Calvo Alfaro, Mariano Baselga Jordán.⁷⁷ The glories of the past when Aragon had access to the sea are set out in 1920 in Calvo Alfaro's article *Mare Nostrum*:

It was Alfonso I who took his conquests to the gates of Tortosa, through the lands of Tarragona, prophesying the essentialness of showing us to the Mediterranean. It was the count of Aranda who longed to strengthen the muscular arm of the Ebro to link it to our sea and Pignatelli, worshipper of the pagan god water, and Costa, illustrious bard of marvellous verses to our river.⁷⁸

Finally, the Ebro is given great symbolic prominence in a number of poems published in *El Ebro* predominantly by Calvo Alfaro. Calvo Alfaro was a man of

⁷⁴ See for instance Leopoldo Abadía Abad, 'Los riegos en Aragón', *El Ebro*, No. 85, January 1924, p. 2.

⁷⁵ The Ebro was navigable until the construction of the Mequinenza dam in the late 1950s and in the period in which *El Ebro* was published was seen as Aragon's exit to the sea.

⁷⁶ The Corona de Aragon was in essence a set of sovereignties assumed by the family Aragón, crowned by the Aragonese as Kings of the Kingdom of Aragon.⁷⁶ The head of the Aragón family was not only king of Aragon but also Count of Barcelona by marriage, king of Majorca and Valencia by conquest and king of Naples and Sicily by inheritance.

⁷⁷ Peiró, 'Nación y estado', p. 117. Mariano García Colas, 'Imperialismo aragonés: nuestro fiume', *El Ebro* No. 19, Nov 1919, p. 20, M. Baselga y Jordan, 'Tortosa y Aragón', *El Ebro*, No. 56, July 1921, p. 8.

⁷⁸ Julio Calvo Alfaro, 'Mare Nostrum', *El Ebro*, No. 33, June 1920, p. 5.

considerable literary vocation. In addition to his numerous articles in *El Ebro* and his pamphlets *Doctrina regionalista de Aragón* (1923) and *Aragón, Estado* (1932) he wrote poems, novels and works for the theatre.⁷⁹ He was editor of *El Ebro* 1919-1920 and between 1921 and 1924.⁸⁰ Significantly, all but one of his poems printed in *El Ebro* appeared in the main period of his editorship, highlighting the different foci of different editors of *El Ebro* and the priorities of the time. The change in editorship to Torrente marked the beginning of a new phase in the magazine. Under Torrente there were two main foci. The first was cultural, centred on the publication of works on Aragonese history and culture whilst at the same time not abandoning theoretical aspects such as defining a nationalist doctrine. Secondly, Torrente placed much more emphasis on intervention in the political life of Aragon than Calvo Alfaro. Clearly Calvo Alfaro placed a considerable amount of importance on the Ebro. In line with the importance he placed on the Ebro, his theorising incorporated the idea of the Ebro as the base of the community, the point of confluence for all Aragonese.⁸¹ For example in *Doctrina regionalista de Aragón* he posed the question, ‘what will be the base of the Community of Aragonese Municipalities’ to which he answered, ‘the river Ebro’.⁸² The Ebro as the basis for a *mancomunidad* was not a new idea but had been put forward previously by regionalists in Aragon, the exact boundaries of which varied according to whose proposal it was.⁸³

In Calvo Alfaro’s poems the Ebro is portrayed as a god-like father-figure, a romantic and virile male suitor to the sea and the source of Aragon’s redemption (Appendix C).⁸⁴ The poems are used to explore symbolic aspects of the Ebro, to reinforce the link between it and another powerful symbol, the Virgin of Pilar, and to highlight economic aspects of importance to Aragon such as increased canalisation and water storage to facilitate increased irrigated agricultural land, water being lost to the sea, the *aragonesista’s* aspiration for an outlet to the Mediterranean sea via the Ebro.

⁷⁹ One of his works entitled *Tierra amada* is a recompilation of Aragonese poems, however to date a copy has not been found.

⁸⁰ Carlos Serrano, ‘Julio Calvo Alfaro y su doctrina regionalista’, *Rolde*, No. 76, (1996), pp. 46-50, p. 46.

⁸¹ Serrano, ‘Julio Calvo Alfaro’, p. 48.

⁸² Julio Calvo Alfaro, *Doctrina regionalista de Aragón*, p. 7.

⁸³ See Peiró, ‘Nación y estado’, pp. 114-16.

⁸⁴ For the full text of these poems and my translations into English see Appendix C.

The *La Virgen y el Río* (1922) is a poetic representation of various symbolic associations surrounding the Ebro; namely its symbolic but platonic relationship with the Virgin of Pilar and its love affair with the sea which serves as an explanation of why it is 'lost to the sea' when there is still such great potential for irrigation.⁸⁵ Behind this romantic explanation of why the Ebro behaves as it does lies the reality of the aspiration for increased canalisation and storage of water for irrigation before it is lost to the sea, together with the hope of Aragon once again having an outlet to the Mediterranean.⁸⁶ Earlier, in his article *Mare Nostrum*, which repeats this aspiration, Calvo Alfaro refers to the Ebro as the husband and the sea his new bride.⁸⁷ The poem *La Virgen y el Río*, written two years later, backs up the idea of a 'marriage' between these two elements which, he argued, would pave the way for Aragon's resurgence, 'from this fusion a better Aragon will come forth, an Aragon renovated and useful for creations'.⁸⁸

Ebro Padre (1923) which focuses on the concept of Father Ebro addresses the Ebro with a paternalistic, godlike reverence with references to the power of God and the Father Ebro closely interspersed and affording similar qualities. Reference to the voice of God, which will be 'everlasting in the annals of the Human Winter, is followed by reference to the everlasting central presence of the Father Ebro in Aragon. In the same way that truth shines with an everlasting light, Aragon lives without doubting that the waters of the Father Ebro will flow through it. It is praised as wise and just, with the father-like qualities of being both sentimental and austere. In the same way as a believer would throw oneself at the mercy of God, the author speaks of throwing himself at the feet of Father Ebro and toasts it arguing that in it are three Gods: Justice, Water and the Soul. There is also reference to Aragonese people who have been forced to emigrate. Father Ebro's forgiveness is sought, like that of God, by his stepchildren living in someone else's house which is presumably a reference to those living in other parts of

⁸⁵ Julio Calvo Alfaro, 'La virgen y el Río, *El Ebro*, June 1922.

⁸⁶ This idea is also expressed in 'Optimismo aragonés' by M. Trullén Bendicho, *El Ebro*, No. 165, 1931, p. 6, 'We ask of our father Ebro that before surrendering himself to the sea, which is his death, the reservoir of land which surrounds him be fruitful and create wealth and be a symbol of wellbeing and good living.'

⁸⁷ Julio Calvo Alfaro, 'Mare Nostrum', *El Ebro*, No. 33, June 1920, p. 5.

⁸⁸ Julio Calvo Alfaro, 'La virgen y el Río, *El Ebro*, June 1922.

Spain. Pardon is sought for those who boast of foreign riches but have never heard his voice or drank his waters, likening them to wandering birds without nests.

The early *aragonesista* aspiration of having access to the sea is the focus of *El Ebro está llamando* (1926) which asks if the floodgates that prevented the Ebro reaching the sea have opened and if ships from foreign seas are coming in.⁸⁹ If this is the case it argues that the Ebro will no longer be the sad, widower father without a future. Calvo Alfaro posits that if the water of Father Ebro ‘gives wings to their hopes’ the Aragonese are therefore called upon to wake up and throw off their yokes. Using the biblical imagery of Costa, the poem claims the Ebro is Aragon’s redemption ‘that lights up everything and makes everything grow’.

In addition to poems by Calvo Alfaro, there are several poems and verses by other authors that portray the Ebro as the spirit of the Aragonese ‘race’ and as a source of future development. In *Canto al Ebro* (1922) Rene Llanas de Niubo likens it to the spirit of the Aragonese ‘race’ arguing that it embodies the three basic and fundamental elements of their Patria: Race, History and Faith.⁹⁰ *Pensamiento Aragonés* (1923) by Francisco Bueno pays tribute to the possibilities that the Ebro offers especially when combined with progress through science, work and energy which he argues will transform the current geography ‘until the Ebro becomes an immense emporium unfolding the most intense force that could be imagined and making it a floating route through which all kinds of traffic would pass’, once again reference to the aspiration for access to the sea.⁹¹ He also pays tribute to Aragonese hydrological genius, praising the magnificent reservoir of Reinosa as an example of outstanding Aragonese talent which increased the flourishing irrigated land.

Calvo Alfaro’s writings on the Ebro have, however, received little or no attention from historians who studied the early movement and the *aragonesista* press in great detail. Their importance lies, therefore, in the fact that *aragonesista* historiography has chosen to ignore them. The reasons for this could lie in the fact

⁸⁹ Julio Calvo Alfaro, ‘El Ebro está llamando’, *El Ebro*, No. 109, May 1926, p. 4.

⁹⁰ Rene Llanas de Niubo, ‘Canto al Ebro’, *El Ebro*, No. 59, September 1921, p. 20.

⁹¹ Francisco Bueno, ‘Pensamiento aragonés’, *El Ebro*, No. 79, April 1923, p. 4.

that later generations of *aragonesistas*, in particular those of the left, idealised the figure of Gaspar Torrente as the ‘father’ of Aragonese nationalism; Carlos Serrano suggests that Calvo Alfaro has always been dogged by an element of ‘black legend’ when compared with Torrente.⁹² He posits that Torrente was more affable and more popular with those who studied *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism because of his greater level of activism and greater nationalist conviction. In addition, Calvo Alfaro came from a relatively well-off family, which may not have endeared him to the left. What is more, left-wing historians, many of whom were involved with *Andalán* and RENA and its magazine *Rolde*, have not shown an affiliation with the romantic symbolism of the Ebro or the iconography of Aragonese geography, landscape and natural symbols (see Chapter 5). This has also carried over to the present day nationalist party CHA possibly as a result of the influence of these scholars, some of whom acted as ‘gurus’ and advisors to the CHA in its early days.⁹³ In addition, the CHA is a lay party and does not therefore identify with religious symbols such as the Virgin of Pilar, a symbol closely associated with the Ebro in Calvo Alfaro’s poems and writings.

Moreover, the idea of utilising the water of the Ebro before it is ‘lost to the sea’, prevalent in *El Ebro* is now challenged as scientifically and environmentally invalid because of the detrimental effects on the Delta caused by the reduction of water as a result of regulation and water storage upstream. The early nationalist group and its idol Costa’s support for this idea is not one that later nationalists whose ideology incorporates strong ecological and environmental tenets would wish to associate with. Costa had promoted campaigns for increased irrigation for agriculture based on the premise that ‘one can not let the water of the rivers go to waste ending up in the sea’.⁹⁴ This concept was understandable 100 years ago in

⁹² Carlos Serrano, ‘Julio Calvo Alfaro. Un aragonesista olvidado’, *Siete de Aragón*, No. 108, 19-25 April 1996, p. 8.

⁹³ See Eloy Fernández Clemente, ‘Diario de un pesimista activo’, *Siete de Aragón* No. 85, 3-9 November 1995, p. 11 and No. 102, 1-7 March 1996, p. 11 where he writes of fraternal meetings over dinner of the newly elected deputies and campaign directors of CHA (Chesús Yuste, Chesús Bernal and Bizén Fuster and ‘historicos’ or ‘ancianos’ of the PSA (Labordeta, Gonzalo Borrás, Fernández Clemente, Emilio Gastón and Enrique Grillo).

⁹⁴ Cited by Carlos Serrano in ‘El eterno olvido de Joaquín Costa’, *Siete de Aragón*, No. 78, 15 September 1995, p. 10.

the absence of scientific evidence regarding the negative environmental effects of canalisation and water diversion.

The Ebro in other 1930s *aragonesista* publications

In the two other *aragonesista* publications of the 1930s, *El Ideal de Aragón-Periódico Regionalista Agrario* (1930-1932) and *Renacimiento Aragonés* (1935-36) less emphasis is placed on the symbolism of the Ebro than is found in *El Ebro* with the emphasis on it as a source of patrimonial wealth and regional development. This is due firstly, to the fact that Torrente, as opposed to Calvo Alfaro, was the prominent figure in their direction, and was not inclined to symbolic representation of the Ebro and secondly, to the overriding agrarian nature of *El Ideal de Aragón* and the autonomist priorities of *Renacimiento Aragonés*.

The predominant discourse in *El Ideal de Aragón* was that of Costa and regeneration through increased irrigated land, which was understandable bearing in mind the agrarian background of the paper. Torrente argues that, 'regionalism and agrarianism should be our slogan given that the spirit and work must go together in order to make Aragon great, prosperous and splendid, worthy of our ancestors'.⁹⁵ In addition there is a fervent defence of the Confederación Sindical Hidrográfica del Ebro, on which a high degree of hope is placed for the future agricultural development of the region. The Ebro and water are linked into this as a source of patrimonial wealth and regional development, 'wealth above ground and underground, and the natural elements form Aragon's heritage'.⁹⁶ Frequent reference is also made to Costa's assertion that 'the River Ebro is the cradle and focal point of Aragonese nationality and Aragon is the rest of Spain's teacher in relation to social questions' as a means of illustrating how Aragon is more than simply a Spanish region but a nationality in its own right.

⁹⁵ Gaspar Torrente, 'El problema de Aragón', *El Ideal de Aragón*, No. 3, 20 July 1930, p. 2.

⁹⁶ Unknown author, 'Bases de gobierno de Aragón aprobadas por el segundo Congreso Aragonesista', *El Ideal de Aragón*, No. 33, 30 April 1931, p. 3.

Renacimiento Aragonés was essentially the newspaper of the new nationalist political party Estado Aragonés set up by Torrente in 1933, and was partly financed by him.⁹⁷ The principal objective of the new party was to carry out the preparatory work necessary for a Statute of Autonomy for Aragon from his base in Barcelona. The victory of the Frente Popular, a coalition of left-wing republicans, socialists and communists in the General Elections of February 1936, once again put in place the mechanism for the autonomous process and laid the ground for an intense campaign for autonomy amongst *aragonesistas*, which culminated in the Congress of Caspe in 1936, immediately prior to the outbreak of the Civil War.⁹⁸ Set against this background the contents of *Renacimiento Aragonés* were by and large of a political nature with its main points of reference being the quest for Aragonese autonomy, defence of the Republic, support for the autonomy of the CHE and criticism of the Church's alliance with the right.⁹⁹

In the 17 issues of the newspaper the symbols of Aragon which receive most mention are Costa and Juan de Lanuza followed by the Ebro, the Aragonese flag and the *jota*. One of its initial activities was to participate in the first tribute to Juan de Lanuza, celebrated in Zaragoza on 22 December 1935. Significantly, today's *aragonesista* left continue this annual tribute. References to the Ebro include an analogy of Aragon as 'the millennial tree whose trunk is the Ebro and whose branches are its tributaries', reference to it as a 'father figure', acknowledgement of its complementary relationship with the Virgin of Pilar and recognition of its economic potential in relation to irrigation, especially if regulated.

Summary and conclusions

The Ebro had a two-pronged importance in the *aragonesismo* of the early nationalists in Barcelona. First, it was a father-figure, life-giver, blood and veins of Aragon, father of the Aragonese ethnicity and nationality, a central element of

⁹⁷ Antonio Peiró Arroyo, 'Gaspar Torrente y los orígenes del aragonesismo', *Trébede*, No. 23, (1999), 25-29, p. 28.

⁹⁸ Prior to this the General Elections of 1933 had brought to power a centre-right government which had brought the autonomic process to a halt.

⁹⁹ See Antonio Peiró, 'Introduction', *Renacimiento Aragonés*, Edición facsímile (Zaragoza: Rolde de Estudios Aragoneses, 1996).

homeland and a physical link with it and an important element of ethno-symbolic myths, symbols, history and collective memory. The early *aragonesistas*, more so than their successors, developed many of the symbolic aspects of the Ebro and their perceptions of it bear many similarities with the way in which rivers and natural elements of territory and its landscape are viewed by theorists of nations and nationalism.

Second, it was an important part of the early *aragonesista*'s vision of redemption through hydrological development. Whilst symbolic aspects reflected influences of Romanticism, Herderian concepts of organic nationalism and the Spanish Generation of 1898's belief in the intimate association between landscape and national and cultural identity, hydrological aspects were firmly rooted in regenerationism and *costismo* and their calls for economic reconstruction of both Aragon and Spain. Irrigation occupied a central position in the *aragonesismo* of the early twentieth century and was based on a model of hydrological works to ensure more irrigated land and development based primarily in agriculture. The main problem was dependence on state investment to finance the hydrological infrastructure necessary to make this possible. The instability of the state due to successive regime changes with the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera, Second Republic and period leading up to the Civil War meant that the momentum for investment in new irrigation was limited and plans approved by one regime were not necessarily implemented by another which led to a sense of grievance amongst those who had placed their hopes in them. The early part of the twentieth century, however, saw the inauguration of three large-scale irrigation systems Riegos del Altoaragón, Riegos del Canal de Aragón y Cataluña and Riegos de Bardenas. In addition, there was a developing view amongst the *aragonesista* group in Barcelona that autonomous management of water is best for the greatest level of economic development. Interestingly, although themselves emigrants the theme of emigration was not developed as one might expect.

The fact that the UA chose the name of Aragon's principal river for their publication, and the association of early twentieth century *aragonesismo* with a powerful symbol of its territory, provides an example of how the early *aragonesistas* prioritised and used a natural element ingrained in popular culture,

of easy identification and evoking a strong sense of belonging. However, the importance of the UA and its magazine *El Ebro* in *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism does not lie solely in its activities and theorising in the early twentieth century but also in the fact that the present day nationalist party CHA chose to recuperate its name and that of its magazine and create a symbolic link with one of its leading figures, Gaspar Torrente. Nationalists, however, are selective in their rehabilitation and recuperation of the past and priorities change, hence the lack of interest by the CHA in the more sentimental, symbolic, religious and agrarian focus placed by their 'predecessors' on the Ebro.

Interestingly, the early *aragonesista* group's perception of the Ebro has been largely ignored by later left-wing historians. Fernández Clemente and Forcadell list the main themes of *El Ebro* as history, art, Aragonese law and, above all, 'politics, *costismo*, forality, agrarianism, municipalism, the evocation of the loss of foral laws and the condition of the Kingdom etc.'. ¹⁰⁰ There is no mention of the Ebro. Similarly, Peiró, credited with 'resurrecting the history of *aragonesismo*', does not mention the writings and poems in *El Ebro* dedicated to the river Ebro. Both he and leading figures in the CHA point out that the reason for the choice of the name *El Ebro* for the Fundación Gaspar Torrente's later magazine did not lie in an attempt to revive or identify with, the symbolism of the river in the way that the early nationalists had. Rather, they wanted to identify with the magazine itself and its importance as a vehicle for debates on nationalist ideology, as well as with the figure of Gaspar Torrente. CHA past president, Bizén Fuster, argues that 'the name [of the current] *El Ebro* is cultural; it doesn't talk of the [river] Ebro but of everything. It speaks of political thought, *aragonesismo*, federalism, and constitutional reforms in Spain, Canada or wherever. The actual *El Ebro* is a magazine of political thought that aims to link with this tradition and with the Unión Aragonesista's trajectory in 1920'. ¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Eloy Fernández Clemente and Carlos Forcadell, *Historia de la prensa aragonesa* (Zaragoza: Guara Editorial, 1979), p. 134.

¹⁰¹ Interview with Bizén Fuster, 23 February 2007, Zaragoza. Similar points were also made in interviews with Antonio Peiró, 24 October 2007, Zaragoza and Chesús Bernal, 23 February 2007, Zaragoza.

CHAPTER 5 HOW THE EBRO WAS VIEWED DURING THE FRANCO DICTATORSHIP AND BY 1970S AND EARLY 1980S ARAGONESISTA FORMATIONS

In the period 1936 to the early 1970s there was an absence of *aragonesista* activities. Following the Civil War (1936-39) the Franco regime sought to eliminate sentiments of regional and national difference and impose a uniformity based on Spanish National Catholicism. The opening section of this chapter examines how the Ebro was used by the Franco regime (1939-75). The subsequent sections analyse how it was viewed by the main currents of *aragonesista* thinking that emerged in the 1970s beginning with the emblematic weekly review newspaper *Andalán* and the intellectuals who contributed to it, some of whom were also involved in the formation of the territorial socialist party, Partido Socialista Aragonés (PSA) in 1976. Next, it examines how the Ebro was viewed by the first nationalist entity to set up in the early years of the Transition, Rolde de Estudios Nacionalistas Aragonés (RENA). This is followed by an analysis of the role of intellectuals in Aragonese consciousness-raising and research on Aragonese topics and how their focus on history influenced a lack of symbolic and iconographic importance being placed on the Ebro by the *aragonesista* left. The pertinent issue is how *aragonesista* press, intellectuals, formations and political parties viewed the Ebro in this pivotal period. Chapters 6 and 7 assess how these ideas influenced present-day *aragonesista* and nationalist thinking in relation to the Ebro.

The use of the Ebro by the Franco Regime

With the outbreak of Civil War many of the regionalists in Zaragoza adapted to the Franquist regime, some gaining posts of responsibility. In Barcelona, *Los Almogávares*, the youth section of the Unión Aragonesista, joined the ranks of the Republican militia which re-conquered some of the Republican territory in Aragon. The subsequent defeat of the Republicans brought to an end all *aragonesista* activities. Gaspar Torrente and Calvo Alfaro ceased their activities and theorisation. Torrente worked for the Generalitat in Oliana and was twice imprisoned by Franco's troops. Calvo Alfaro resumed his non-political literary work and worked as a lawyer.

The new centralist regime sought to bury sentiments of regional and national difference and impose a uniformity based on Spanish National Catholicism. The most notable Aragonese symbols of identity, the Virgin of Pilar, the *jota* and the Ebro were incorporated by the dictatorship and promoted as quintessential symbols of Spain. The Ebro, as Spain's most voluminous, second longest and arguably most emblematic river, having given its name to the whole Peninsula and having been intimately linked with Spanish history, was accorded an important place in Spanish patriotism and nationalism. The Virgin of Pilar became patron of *la hispanidad*, *la raza*, and the Guardia Civil, the *jota* was incorporated into Spanish patriotism and the Confederación Hidrográfica del Ebro became an instrument of Francoist water policy in the construction of dams and reservoirs. The important role of Zaragoza in the Spanish War of Independence against Napoleon, Franco's close link with its military academy and the election of the Virgin of Pilar as patroness of Hispano America and of the paramilitary Civil Guard made Aragon and its symbols an important part of Franco's unitary vision of Spain.

Following the dictatorship Aragon was therefore one of the worst hit regions for loss of cultural identity as a result of the incorporation of its symbols as part of a uniform Spanish identity as this diluted the level of Aragonese particularism and distinctiveness associated with them.¹ That is to say, Aragonese difference could not be based on symbols that were also symbols of Spain. Over time Zaragozan local identity became rooted in Spanish patriotism and then in moderate Aragonese regionalism which made Aragon an 'a privileged place in 'Spanishness''.² This identity, Mairal argues, was that of a Spanish region that whilst exhibiting some peculiarities such as the character of its people, its folklore and *el baturrismo* was firmly integrated into Spain. Such an identity was not therefore based on difference. He argues that as a result many Aragonese believe that this identity was of little worth in the construction of difference and in the quest for increased autonomy. Consequently, it is necessary to turn to an identity that is based on difference. In Aragon's history there have been two examples of particularist identities: one based

¹ See Antonio Peiró Arroyo, *Historia del Aragonesismo* (Zaragoza: Ediziós de l'Astral, 1999), p. 136.

² Mairal, *La identidad*, p. 48.

on constitutional *fueros* up to the sixteenth century and one based on irredentism in the twentieth century.³

On the other hand, however, from the end of the Franco era much has been done in Aragon to rebuild its national identity and rehabilitate, reconstruct, recast and resemanticise its symbols and history. This type of reconstruction, as Smith points out, is typical of nationalist movements 'the active role of nationalism, and of nationalists is threefold, rediscovery, reinterpretation and regeneration of the community.'⁴ Rehabilitation of Aragonese symbols began in the 1970s with campaigns to reawaken a sense of Aragonese consciousness after years of repression under Franco and has been greatly aided by Aragon's opposition during the course of the last thirty years to the transfer of water from the Ebro. Anti-transfer demonstrations symbolically brought together *el Pilar* and the Ebro and recast them once more as symbols of Aragonese identity, future and in the case of the Ebro, injustice, grievance and lack of respect. In a study of the demonstrations in Aragon between 1990 and 2000 in pursuit of increased autonomy, defence of Aragon's water and Aragon's recognition as a nationality, Guillén Pardos argues that considerable steps have been taken by the Aragonese Government and the press to *resemantizar* and *aragonizar* these symbols.⁵ I would also argue that the perception of Aragonese symbols as stereotypes of essential Spanishness has been redefined since the 1970s, in particular as a result of the campaigns and demonstrations to prevent the transfer of water from the Ebro, which have recast and reinforced these symbols, particularly the Ebro, as symbols of Aragon both inside and outside Aragon, although not undertaken solely by its territorial parties. Anti-transfer demonstrations have coincided with emblematic days such as the Fiestas de Pilar and the Día de Aragón. Some politicians have played down the manipulation of public sentiments or use of religious symbols arguing that such occasions were selected simply because they brought together large numbers of people, and the CHA has argued that as a lay party it does not identify with religious symbols such as *el Pilar*. However, the significance of this linkage in the Aragonese popular imagination cannot be denied.⁶ Even politicians who are not of a nationalist orientation affirm that there is an

³ Mairal, *La identidad*, p. 48.

⁴ Smith, 'Gastronomy or Geology', p. 16.

⁵ Guillén Pardos, 'Medios y sociedad', 4.2.1 (p. 17).

⁶ Interviews with Ramón Tejedor, 20 February 2007, Zaragoza and Chesús Bernal.

identification of 'aragoneseness' with the Ebro and its waters.⁷ Consequently, the previous appropriation by Franco would not significantly affect the development of the Ebro as a symbol of Aragon should that be desired.

Water policy in the period of the dictatorship

During the Franco regime an extreme form of centralisation became the official state ideology and was used as a means to undermine the multinational and multilingual character of the country.⁸ In this atmosphere, water policy was directed towards Spanish national priorities and serving the needs of the regime itself. This form of state-wide resource regulation, which had the ultimate aim of ensuring cheap water for national economic growth, ignored regional considerations. The period from the end of the Civil War to the 1960s was characterised by major infrastructural development in the name of modernisation. The resulting increase in water storage capacity, irrigated areas and energy generation is regarded as an example of the 'public works state', as the Franco era has often been labelled.⁹ The 1940 Plan General de Obras Públicas, in which water policy formed a central part, was organised along two main axes. Firstly, state financed irrigation projects were aimed at increasing national crop productivity and modifying land tenure. Irrigation was envisaged as a way of creating an expanding class of small farmers without challenging the interests of the large landowners who had been among the main supporters of the 1936 military revolt.¹⁰ It was also seen as a way of populating the empty areas of the Spanish interior and putting the vast dry farming areas of central and southern Spain on a similar footing as the highly productive irrigated areas of the eastern *huertas*.¹¹ This policy was known as 'integral colonization' and involved state financed conversion of dry land to irrigation with the former owners receiving a plot of land of equal value to the dry land they held and new colonists being given

⁷ According to Ramón Tejedor, 'in other parts of Spain when anyone says he is Aragonese they say, 'Ah you who don't want them to take water from the Ebro. Therefore, it's an identification of 'aragoneseness' with the Ebro and with the waters of the Ebro'.

⁸ The outbreak of the Civil War halted the drafting or ratification of Statutes in Aragon and Galicia and Franco overturned those already granted to Catalonia, the Basque Country under the Second Republic and banned the use of regional languages, flags and other symbols of a regional character in an attempt to forge a uniform 'Spanish identity'.

⁹ Del Moral and Saurí, 'Changing Course', p. 32.

¹⁰ Saurí and Del Moral, 'Recent Developments', p. 355.

¹¹ Saurí and Del Moral, 'Recent Developments', p. 355.

plots of the surplus land. In Aragon 56,790 hectares of irrigated land were handed over to new colonists resulting in 40 new settlements with a population of 18,180 by 1981.¹² The construction of reservoirs to store water for irrigation reached its peak between 1951 and 1970 with regulating capacity for irrigation in the Ebro Basin in 1980 being five times that of 1940.¹³ Secondly, the Plan prioritised manufacturing. Whilst it failed to meet its goals for Spain as a whole, the construction of dams to provide hydroelectricity for industry went forward at a tremendous pace and had a considerable impact on areas such as Aragon, the water policies of the Franco period having negative as well as positive effects in Aragon.¹⁴ Forced appropriation of land and properties and examples of dynamiting of houses in mountain area in the 1960s and 1970s laid the ground for claims that the regime rode roughshod over the interests of the Aragonese mountain populations in favour of providing hydroelectric power for industrialised areas of Spain which created a lasting sense of grievance. Also, the regime's lack of consideration for environmental aspects and demographic displacement paved the way for social protest movements and associations in defence of people affected by dams and reservoirs from the 1970s which would become an important part of the *aragonesismo* of the 1980s onwards and the left-wing nationalist party CHA which supported these groups and took an ecological stance against reservoirs which would have high social and ecological consequences.

The Mequinenza reservoir is a prime example of a hydroelectric project of the Franco era, which resulted in the destruction of the old town of Mequinenza, situated at the confluence of the rivers Ebro and Segre in the Catalan speaking part of Aragon known as La Franja. Mequinenza and daily life transporting goods on the Ebro figure prominently in the literary works of Jesús Moncada, which explore the collective memory of the town through story-telling up to its destruction in 1971.¹⁵ The old town of Mequinenza is brought back to life by the author through a series of

¹² See Pinilla, 'Irrigated Agriculture', pp. 129-131.

¹³ Pinilla, 'Irrigated Agriculture', p. 131.

¹⁴ As a result the amount of water stored in reservoirs rose from 4.2 billion cubic metres in 1939 to almost 8 billion cubic metres in 1952. Most of the dams in the 'water-rich' basins of Northern Spain were owned and managed by the hydroelectric companies whereas in the 'water-scarce' basins of the South the government owned and operated most of the reservoirs which were used for irrigation and flood control. See Del Moral and Saurí, 'Changing Course', p. 15.

¹⁵ See Jesús Moncada, *The Towpath*, translated from Catalan by Judith Willis (London: Harvill, 1994).

characters, such as boatmen and miners.¹⁶ Although a new town of the same name was built many original inhabitants of Mequinenza left for Barcelona or Zaragoza thereby contributing to Aragon's problems of population loss or concentration in Zaragoza. In 2007 Mequinenza would be the scene of the PAR's demand for full devolved powers in relation to water and its commitment to defend the Ebro and Aragon's rivers with the Ebro as the 'insignia river of Aragon'.¹⁷

The next phase of Spain's hydraulic development began in the mid 1960s when the peak of dam construction was reaching an end, as was the case in most other medium and highly developed countries. In Spain, large-scale dam construction was overtaken by the concept of water transfers between river basins, the possibility of which had been considered in the Pardo Plan of 1933. The Tajo-Segura scheme, which was initiated in 1966 and became operational in 1979, was to be the first phase of a vast programme of water-transfers aimed at resolving the water needs of the whole peninsula. This project met with a degree of opposition that was unheard of in this period of authoritarian rule and, with hindsight, could be viewed as a sign of things to come. This opposition was countered by overwhelming official propaganda aimed at obtaining public support for the proposal and labelling those who criticised it as unpatriotic.¹⁸ Considerable efforts went into the promotion of concepts of 'water lost to the sea', 'taking water from where there is a "surplus" to where there is a shortage' and the creation of the 'myth' of two Spains, a 'wet Spain' and a 'dry Spain', in order to justify water transfer which still remain in usage.

In February 1974 the government's proposal to transfer 1,400 hm³ of water per year from the Ebro to the Barcelona area, the Ebro-Pirineo Oriental Aqueduct, for domestic supply, irrigation and industrial uses was announced in the Official Bulletin of the Province of Tarragona and local authority areas of affected populations as part of a period of public information for the proposal. This was part of the Silvia Muñoz Plan which proposed rapid expansion of the Spanish economy based in certain areas

¹⁶ See also Sandrine Ribes, 'The Short Stories: The Universe and Voices of Mequinenza', in *Where the Rivers Meet: Jesús Moncada*, ed. by Kathryn Crameri (Nottingham: Five Leaves Publications, 2011), pp. 56-93 (p. 59).

¹⁷ 'El PAR despliega una gran bandera de Aragón en el Ebro para reivindicar plenas competencias en materia de agua', 22 May 2007, <www.aragondigital.es/asp/noticia.asp?notid=34128&secid=18> [accessed 22/06/07].

¹⁸ Martínez Gil, *El agua a debate*, p. 15.

of the country, one of which was Barcelona, which would mean a considerable increase in water consumption. With hindsight growth on the scale forecast did not occur. No announcement was made in Aragon as it was argued that none of the works would be carried out in there, water regulation works already being in place in the Pyrenees.¹⁹ As we will see later in the chapter this lack of consultation and consideration of Aragon's interests would lead to accusations that Aragon had been treated with a lack of respect and fuel the reactive side of an *aragonesismo* based on defence of the Ebro as a patrimonial resource and a symbol of Aragonese identity. A sense of grievance would become a powerful element of cohesion and an instrument for creating collective identity, with the *aragonesismo* of the Transition period encouraging identity formation using the exploitation of resources, in particular water. The *aragonesista* left basing its opposition in a view of water as a patrimonial resource that should be managed locally and in economic and ideological arguments which incorporated Marxist arguments relating to 'uneven-development' and 'internal colonialism' and the idea that water transfer would mortgage Aragon's future development. The centre-right regionalist *aragonesismo* of the PAR basing its opposition in regional development arguments that water transfer would deepen inequalities that already existed between Aragon and Catalonia and in a 'development strategy' based on hydrological works that had its origins in the ideological thinking of Costa and regenerationism and incorporating some of the postulates of Francoist water policy, such as, the construction of large-scale reservoirs to regulate and store water destined for irrigation but directed first to the benefit of Aragon.

According to Saurí and Del Moral, water policy of the Franco period and up to the draft Plan Hidrológico Nacional put forward by the Socialist government in 1993 could be characterised by what they call the 'hydraulic paradigm'. This policy is described as a form of public 'managerialism' based on the Spanish 'national interest' and a mode of state-based resource regulation with the ultimate objective of ensuring cheap water availability for economic growth.²⁰ In this respect their

¹⁹ The proposed aqueduct of 160 km would run between Benifallet and Llobregat.

²⁰ Saurí and Del Moral, 'Recent Developments', p. 351. They point out that this form of public managerialism based on the 'national interest' was not unique to Spain but existed in the western United States and, more recently, in developing countries. Such a policy, they argue, showed no consideration for environmental factors or the human hardships caused by the flooding of valleys.

‘hydraulic paradigm’ could be applied to water policy under Franco. However, their assertion that this paradigm is a conscious policy by central government to develop water resources so that everyone throughout the country would have the water they required, when they required it would not, as the later Francoist policy was directed at the economic growth of selected areas. Saurí and Del Moral conclude that the ‘hydraulic paradigm’ culminated in the 1993 PHN, the demise of which owed much to the fact that water policy handed down from pre-1978 central government was poorly suited to the changing political and administrative structure of post-Franco Spain due to a greater voice given to autonomous regions by the 1978 Constitution and growing regional consciousness resulting in fierce opposition by water-rich regions to the transfer of part of their resources to water-scarce areas.²¹ The 1990s drought, they argue, ‘highlighted the contradictions of such an approach with the new social, economic and political realities in Spain’.²² This is not to say that Spanish ‘democracy’ is a failure as projects deemed to benefit the nation can not be implemented due to a growing regional consciousness but that central government cannot ride roughshod over the interests of a community.

Thus, the perceptions of the Ebro and water in the *aragonesismos* that emerged in the 1970s and 1980s were largely a response to the water transfer and dam and reservoir construction policies of the Franco era. In the 1970s the *aragonesista* left-wing’s response combined with the influence of Marxist perspectives and the centre-right’s response with a regionalist and agrarian perspective and a view of economic development based on the ideology of regenerationism and increased irrigated agricultural land. Both left and centre-right would share a common goal of raising awareness of the problems faced by Aragon as a result of state water policy and both would encourage identity formation though grievance over the exploitation of resources, in particular water. The socio-ecological effects of Franco era water policy would play an important part of the *aragonesismo* of the left-wing nationalist party CHA that emerged in the 1980s.

²¹ Del Moral and Saurí, ‘Changing Course’, p. 33.

²² Del Moral and Saurí, ‘Changing Course’, p. 14.

Resurgence of regionalist and territorial formations

As the dictatorship drew to a close mid-1970s Aragon, like a number of other Spanish regions, witnessed a resurgence of regionalist and territorial-based formations which embarked on campaigns to reawaken Aragonese consciousness after the long period of repression and a system of administrative organisation based on the province and municipality as opposed to the region. This revival took the form of campaigns aimed at fostering Aragonese values through popular music, theatre, language, folklore and historical and cultural studies.²³ In the political sphere, 1975 saw the formation of a territorial socialist party Partido Socialista Aragonés (PSA), and 1977 the creation of the regionalist party Partido Aragonés Regionalista (PAR) and the first nationalist entity, RENA, which although not a political party had a clearly political component up to 1986. Academics and intellectuals, for the most part left-wing, raised awareness of the ‘Aragonese reality’, such as proposed water transfers, exploitation of natural resources, the problems of emigration and nuclear plants, through research and its dissemination. The principal means of dissemination was through newly emergent Aragonese publishing companies such as Librería General, Alcrudo, Guara Editorial, UNALI and Moncayo; workshops organised by the newly-created associations; the *aragonesista* newspaper *Andalán* and popular music, *la Nueva Canción Aragonesa*, spearheaded by José Antonio Labordeta, Joaquin Carbonell and La Bullonera. As one contemporary observer pointed out, ‘in the recent awakening of the Aragonese regional consciousness three factors were influential: the transfer of water from the Ebro, the songs of Labordeta and *Andalán*.’²⁴

²³ In Aragon it inspired the creation of associations such as Amigos de Serrablo, Consello d’a Fabla Aragonesa and the Ligallo de Fablans de l’Aragonés aimed at the recuperation of Aragonese language and culture, the Seminario de Estudios Aragoneses, set up to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of Aragon’s attempts to gain a Statute of Autonomy in 1936, the Instituto Aragonés de Antropología and the Rolde de Estudios Aragoneses. For further discussion of events in Aragon see Royo-Villanova, pp. 146-251.

²⁴ Ángel Garcés, ‘El nuevo regionalismo y el proceso autonómico en Andalán’, in *Andalán, 1972-1987: los espejos de la memoria*, ed. by Carlos Forcadell (Zaragoza: Ibercaja, 1997), pp. 107-136 (p. 136). See also Jesús-Pedro Lorente Lorente, ‘El periódico ‘Andalán’ como fuente para el estudio del arte contemporáneo, la música y las artes populares en Aragón’, *Metodología de la Investigación Científica sobre Fuentes Aragonesas*. Jornadas (4ª. 1988. Daroca), 4, Zaragoza, (1989), 503-11 (p. 509).

Opposition to the proposed transfer of water from the Ebro to Barcelona was instrumental in this identity formation process. The Ebro and water were incorporated into a 'vision of awakening' common to both the left and the centre-right that sought to raise awareness of the problems faced by Aragon as a result of 'exploitation' of its natural resources and outward emigration. This had the effect of creating a 'defence of what is ours' discourse and heightened awareness of Aragonese identity.²⁵ From the 1970s water transfer and the Ebro became intertwined with a sense of Aragonese consciousness, grievance and the struggle for autonomy and as one interviewee observed 'the Ebro keeps getting pulled in and associated with the Virgin of Pilar, with Costa and with other symbols'.²⁶ However, from the mid 1970s it became necessary to distinguish between the river Ebro, the symbol Ebro, the transfer of water from the Ebro, water in general and irrigation. The symbolic aspects of the Ebro highlighted by the nationalist group in the early part of the century would be overtaken by a grievance factor and an *aragonesismo* or *aragonesismos* that were defensive as a result of central government plan to transfer water from the Ebro to Barcelona and use of Aragon as a 'region of reserve', supplying energy to other areas of Spain, which had gained momentum under the Franco regime.

The 1970s saw a growing tendency for water to be viewed as a regional resource that should, in the first instance, benefit its own community's development and industrialisation.²⁷ In Aragon the transfer of hydro-electric energy was seen as one more transfer of resources from the region, the others being the transfer of human resources (emigration) and the proposed transfer of water to Barcelona.²⁸ In 1974, Hipólito Gómez de las Rocas, President of the Diputación de Zaragoza, instigated a policy opposing the proposed water transfer on a regional development and regional inequality basis.²⁹ This was highly significant as it was the first time a local authority had opposed Government policy under Franco and also because Gómez de las Rocas would go on to form Aragon's regionalist political party, the Partido Aragónés

²⁵ Serrano, 'Los mitos hidráulicos', p. 19.

²⁶ Interview with Gaspar Mairal.

²⁷ Blanco, p. 16.

²⁸ Royo-Villanova, p. 191.

²⁹ Royo-Villanova, p. 191. Zaragoza's Civil Governor Frederico Trillo-Figuera was dismissed in 1974 for speaking out against the transfer to Barcelona.

Regionalista (PAR) in 1977 which was formed precisely to defend Aragon's water and fight for the interests and development of the region.

How the Ebro was viewed in *Andalán*

Andalán was set up in 1972 by a group of mainly left-wing intellectuals from Zaragoza University, teaching and the media and had as its founding editor Eloy Fernández Clemente.³⁰ It ran for 15 years with sales rising from 3,000 copies to 16,000 and subscriptions from 280 to 5,100.³¹ Its founders were opposed to the Franco regime and consequently encountered a number of difficulties in the early years ranging from insults to police pressure and even imprisonment. In this period, *Andalán* published on subjects previously forbidden such as democracy, autonomy and Aragonese history and culture and highlighted problems faced by Aragon, such as the transfer of water and citing of nuclear power stations on the Ebro. In addition, in the later years of the Franco regime and during the Transition, *Andalán* epitomised the struggle for freedom and democracy, incorporating as its main pillars a left-wing ideology, *aragonesismo* and the quest to recover Aragonese culture and consciousness. According to Fernández Clemente, 'it was like a 'table with three legs' that always combined the ingredients, left, *aragonesismo* and culture ...'.³² Water was seen as a key to Aragon's problems: emigration, rural exodus, territorial imbalance, demographic imbalance and economic development. Like other *aragonesista* entities of the period it set about to raise awareness of these problems and developed a discourse of 'defence of what is ours'.

When *Andalán* was set up little was known of the prior existence of the magazine *El Ebro*. It was not until the early 1980s that they became aware of it.³³ Whilst there was an original collection in Caspe, there were only isolated issues in Zaragoza. The line of continuity with the *aragonesismo* of the early twentieth century had been firmly broken by the long period of dictatorship. In the 1980s scholars such as Peiró,

³⁰ *Andalán* is an old adverbial agricultural term. To hoe or dig 'a andalán' is to do it in one go, to create a huge furrow without tiny holes. This is a reference to the aim of the founding group to recover a sense of Aragonese identity following years of repression under Franco.

³¹ Fernández Clemente and Forcadell, p. 242.

³² Eloy Fernández Clemente, 'Sobre Andalán, un inventario personal', <<http://www.10lineas.com/eloy/andalan.htm>> [accessed 18 November 2006] (para. 6 of 32).

³³ Interview with Antonio Peiró.

who was involved with *Rolde* and later became editor of *Andalán* and Pinilla, who was also involved with *Rolde* were pioneers of the revival of the history of *aragonesismo*, publishing their first monograph in 1981. Their research, however, focussed primarily on historical and theoretical aspects as opposed to topics such as the Ebro.

Andalán is an important source of progressive *aragonesista* thinking of this period and is also significant in that it brought together many *aragonesistas* who have continued to cast their influence on *aragonesista* thinking in both cultural and political capacities and in the media. Its significance and legacy are summed up as follows:

Andalán was always viewed, above all from outside Aragon, as a champion of *aragonesismo*, given that it was singularly and effectively concerned with Aragon's pressing problems in these years.³⁴

Andalán was an articulation of the *aragonesista* left of the time, but its philosophy stayed alive because the majority of the aims put forward twenty years ago, such as the Statute of Autonomy, water and territorial ordination have still not been resolved...³⁵

Unlike the earlier *aragonesistas*, those who wrote in *Andalán* did not view the Ebro in a symbolic or romantic way. How it and more specifically the transfer of water were viewed falls into four main categories all incorporating territorial arguments and a strong sense of defence of territory. First, they were seen in a reactive way in response to the water policies of the Franco era. Secondly, there was grievance that the transfer proposal put forward in 1974 had been formulated without any consideration or respect for Aragon and grievance over the fact that Aragon itself had water-related problems, exploitation of its natural resources and outward emigration and was expected to cede water to other areas. Thirdly, economic aspects were paramount in *Andalán's* opposition to the proposal transfer of water and were combined with a view of water as a patrimonial resource. Fourthly, water transfer

³⁴ Eloy Fernández Clemente, 'Diario de un pesimista activo', *Siete de Aragón*, No. 110, 3-9 May 1996, p. 11.

³⁵ Antonio Peiró cited in Nacho Nicolau, 'Prensa aragonesista. Un siglo de reivindicaciones', *Siete de Aragón*, 13-19 January 1995, pp. 16-17.

and exploitation of natural resources brought into play a series of prevailing Marxist arguments.

Firstly, the Ebro and water were seen in a reactive way in response to the water policies of the Franco era. As previously indicated Fernández Clemente and Fatás, who were instrumental in the creation of *Andalán*, argue that the new *aragonesismo* that emerged at the end of the 60s and in the 70s was a response to the way in which Aragon had been treated in the period prior to this.³⁶ In *Andalán*, *Rolde* and left-wing *aragonesismo* this new *aragonesismo* was also seen as a response to Aragon's underdevelopment and exploitation by large Spanish firms, such as electric companies which had the backing of the Franco regime. Moreover, the new *aragonesismo* also acquired the character of a radical movement in pursuit of democracy. The Franco regime's announcement in 1973 of its intention to transfer water from the Ebro to Catalonia and the construction of a number of nuclear power stations on the Ebro, led to the emergence an opposition movement that was clearly *aragonesista* in character and aimed at defending Aragonese territory, interests, people and identity.

Secondly, *Andalán's* opposition carried a feeling of grievance that the transfer proposal had been formulated clandestinely in Madrid without any consideration or respect for Aragon. Moreover, *Andalán* used the transfer proposal to protest about the 'undemocratic' way in which the whole thing had been done in the latter part of the Franco era without talking to all interested parties and ignoring the fact that Aragon had something to say and should have been consulted. As a result, Fernández Clemente argues Aragon discovered how 'small' it was, not in terms of territory but in terms of voice and population and that in such circumstances there was no other remedy than to protest in the streets.³⁷ This is fertile ground for nationalist sentiment:

Nationalism provides a proto-language for defending the right of people to help decide the fate of the places they inhabit, as well as a language for criticizing agents and forces riding roughshod over that right, whether they are agents and forces of capitalism, of a dictatorial

³⁶ Fernández Clemente and Fatás, p. 219. See p. 79, note 41.

³⁷ Interview with Eloy Fernández Clemente.

state, or of a power that also is foreign in the ethnic, racial or national sense.³⁸

Fernández Clemente and Fatás argue that the way in which the transfer proposal had been formulated awakened a sense of regional consciousness and according to Fernández Clemente a feeling ‘that they were going to take something that is ours, such as a patrimonial resource and also a symbol of identity’.³⁹ The transfer proposal was seen an attack on the most important part of the ‘being’ of the Aragonese and this is why it had so much success in protests. Consequently, this had the effect of placing popular emphasis on fighting for the Ebro, of defending the water of the Ebro, as a resource not only of the past and present but also of the future.⁴⁰

Thirdly, economic arguments were paramount and were combined with territorial arguments in *Andalán’s* opposition to water transfer. Water was seen as a patrimonial resource that belonged to Aragon and should be managed locally and as a driving force of industrialisation and regional development. This view that water and natural resources are the property of the community in which they are located and should be managed on a regional basis was expressed on several occasions in *Andalán* in the 1970s:

Energy resources and raw materials are the property of the community in which they are found. Therefore, Aragon’s water resources should be managed regionally under popular and democratic control and an autonomic form of management. The final objective of autonomic and regional management of water resources is hydraulic self-sufficiency.⁴¹

There was a perception of water as a source of regional development and regional power for Aragon. This was summed up by Mario Gaviria in 1972 in one of the early editions of *Andalán*, ‘it is not only water but regional development, ordination of territory and in summary the democratic regional power which is an issue’.⁴² Such a view was at odds with Franco’s water policy which gave precedence to state-wide priorities. In the same edition, Andrés de Leiva put forward the argument that the

³⁸ Cocks, p. 162.

³⁹ Fernández Clemente and Fatás, p. 219 and interview with Eloy Fernández Clemente.

⁴⁰ Interview with Eloy Fernández Clemente.

⁴¹ Manuel Porquet Manzano, ‘Democracia hasta en el agua’, *Andalán*, No. 100, 1 November 1976, p. 27.

⁴² Mario Gaviria, ‘Las contradicciones del trasvase del río Ebro a Cataluña y Valencia’, *Andalán*, No. 5, 15 November 1972, p. 8.

transfer of water from the Ebro would serve only to widen economic inequalities between developed regions to which the water was destined and the less developed donor region, an argument which was to become the cornerstone of all-party Aragonese opposition to the transfer of water in the post-Transition period.⁴³ The regional inequality question was also taken up by Carlos Sancho Coscolluela, along with the argument that water is necessary for the future of Aragon and that it should not have to ‘mortgage’ its future development: a concept that would also be prominent in opposition arguments to later transfer proposals.⁴⁴

According to Fernández Clemente *Andalán* was defending what was considered to be a patrimonial resource and a ‘door to the future’ for more industrialisation. It was seen a means to support a larger population in the future and Aragon could not therefore afford to mortgage its future. Added to this, there was a ‘feeling that they were stealing something from us’.⁴⁵ The idea of water as ‘ours’ was understandable prior to the concept of water belonging to the public domain, as laid down in Article 128.1 of the Spanish Constitution of 1978. The emphasis throughout the articles published by *Andalán* in opposition to the transfer falls on the transfer of water from the Ebro, as opposed to the river Ebro itself, or the symbol Ebro and water in general as opposed to the ‘Ebro’, ‘Aragon’s capital raw material is the torrents of water that descend from the mountains and valleys towards the bed of the Ebro’.⁴⁶

Thus, it was not the river Ebro or the ‘symbol Ebro’ that was being defended in *Andalán* but a function of wealth. The Ebro is seen by Fernández Clemente as a motive of dispute and struggle. It is not the subject but the object. When people defend it they are not so much defending the river but ‘my water’. He argues that people defend their right to ownership of water and use of water without having much affection for the river. They defend it because it is their river not because they love it, only because it brings life. When it is threatened it stirs up more emotion.⁴⁷ Similarly, Fatás argued that it was central government that has made the Ebro

⁴³ Andrés de Leiva, ‘Aragón y el agua’, *Andalán*, No. 5, 15 November 1972, p. 8.

⁴⁴ Carlos Sancho Coscolluela, ‘Los trasvases y el desarrollo regional’, *Andalán*, No. 37, 15 March 1974, p. 8.

⁴⁵ Interview with Eloy Fernández Clemente.

⁴⁶ Mario Gaviria, ‘Regadíos’, *Andalán*, No. 36, 1 March 1974, p. 4.

⁴⁷ Interview with Eloy Fernández Clemente. This theme of lack of affection for the river was also raised in interviews with Gaspar Mairal, José Luis Trasobares, 4 November 2008, Zaragoza and José Ramón Marcuello, 23 October 2006, Zaragoza.

important in the last three generations, i.e. under the governments of Franco, González and Aznar, as a result of its interest in the transfer potential of the Ebro and lack of willingness to talk about Aragon's communications, depopulation and desertification problems. In this way the Ebro involuntarily became the protagonist.⁴⁸

Fourthly, water transfer and exploitation of natural resources brought into play a series of prevailing Marxist arguments relating to 'uneven-development' and 'internal colonialism' together with a strong sense of defensive regionalism.⁴⁹ In the 1970s the 'internal colonialism' concept was being formulated and arrived in Spain as a result of the works of the French author, Robert Lafont.⁵⁰ Aragon's situation showed many similarities and with an editorial team of predominantly left-wing and Marxist orientation it was logical that they would embrace this concept. The perception of Aragon as a *región de reserva*, whose purpose was to provide natural resources for its more powerful and more developed neighbours was prevalent in many of the articles that appeared in *Andalán* and in analyses of the economic repercussions that the transfer of water from the Ebro presented.⁵¹ According to theories of 'internal economic colonialism' the space and natural resources of underdeveloped regions are used to benefit their more developed neighbours.⁵² Aragon's situation was described in *Andalán* in the following way:

The traits of colonialism in the region of Aragon are abundant: industry is, for the most part, in the hands of foreign capital and large Spanish firms outside the region, with a certain tendency to use Aragonese space as a region of reserve by installing industries that would be better relocated in other areas, as is the case of the iron alloy factories of Monzón and the network of nuclear power stations that they would make the Ebro valley the Spanish zone with the greatest density of experimentation in this field of technology which is being strongly criticised for the high level of potential risk that it carries with it.⁵³

However, rather than single out the state or other Spanish communities as the exploiter(s), as is frequent in regionalist and nationalist arguments, Aragon was perceived as a land colonised by capitalism and blame was frequently allocated to the

⁴⁸ Interview with Guillermo Fatás, 28 November 2006, Zaragoza.

⁴⁹ See also Michael Hechter, *Internal Colonialism* and Tom Nairn, *The break-up of Britain*.

⁵⁰ Interview with Antonio Peiró.

⁵¹ Garcés, 'El nuevo regionalismo', p. 115.

⁵² Garcés, 'El nuevo regionalismo', pp. 107-136.

⁵³ Manuel Porquet Manzano, 'El trasvase del Ebro', *Andalán*, No. 76, 1 November 1975, p. 10.

electric companies acting in Aragon or to other large companies in regions seeking additional water:

Contrary to what is generally believed Aragon's water does not belong to the Aragonese. Although the water of the Ebro and all of its tributaries runs through our lands, and in some cases, goes to water the few existing irrigated areas, the true owners and beneficiaries of Aragon's water are the electric companies that operate in the region.⁵⁴

The view that 'aggressions' against Aragon's environment, water and the mountains are of an economic nature and stem from the economic interests of firms in other areas of Spain was also expressed in the interview with the CHA's former president Azucena Lozano.⁵⁵ However, academic interpretations of Aragon's situation by Gaviria, who also wrote in *Andalán*, and Baigorri viewed it in terms of a predator state: centre periphery dialectic and ecological colonialism.⁵⁶ In this interpretation it is argued that in the post Franco period there was an upsurge of ethnic nationalism in the most developed Spanish regions, the Basque Country and Catalonia and an environmental and economic regionalism in some of the least developed, such as Aragon.⁵⁷ Gaviria argues that the first battles in defence of the environment or more precisely, defence of territories whose population was being threatened by schemes with a high level of ecological impact were in reality battles against the state.⁵⁸

In summary, the Ebro and water were viewed in terms of unequal exchange, regional imbalance and inequalities and exploitation, with *Andalán* and the *aragonesista* left focused on the Marxist concepts of 'internal colonialism', 'uneven development' and central government's use of Aragon as 'region of reserve'.⁵⁹ In economic terms the Ebro and water were viewed as part of a 'vision of development and future prosperity' and focussed on the opportunity costs of mortgaging the future by committing a quantity of water for industrial and agricultural use in other areas. Whilst there were similarities between how the Ebro and water were viewed by the

⁵⁴ José Luis Fandos, 'El agua: un lujo para Aragón', *Andalán*, No. 122, 15 July 1977, p. 10.

⁵⁵ Interview with Azucena Lozano.

⁵⁶ See Baigorri, 'Predator State', pp. 1, 12-15.

⁵⁷ Baigorri, 'Predator State', p. 13.

⁵⁸ Mario Gaviria cited in Baigorri, 'Predator State', p. 13.

⁵⁹ A 'region of reserve' was a term used in the 1970s to refer to a region, such as Aragon, whose natural resources, for instance, water and hydroelectricity, were utilised to supply other more developed regions of Spain.

two sides of *aragonesismo* that emerged in the 1970s there were also divergences with the centre-right which focused to a greater extent on victimisation and injustice in relation to other regions as opposed to ‘internal colonialism’ and on a ‘vision of development and future prosperity’ based heavily in increased irrigation together with a more symbolic perception of the Ebro as life and hope. The Ebro was not viewed in a Romantic way or ethno-symbolic way by the left but in a reactive and economic manner with the focus falling predominantly on water. It was not the river Ebro or the ‘symbol Ebro’ that was being defended but a function of wealth. It was seen as a patrimonial resource that belongs to Aragon and should be managed locally and as a driver of future industrialisation and regional development. In addition, it was viewed as a source of grievance and as one of a series of problems that faced Aragon as a result of it being a ‘region of reserve’ for powerful neighbours in line with ‘uneven development’ and ‘internal colonialism’ theories prevalent at the time. It was seen as an object rather than subject, as a motive and as an involuntary protagonist as a result of water transfer proposals.

How the Ebro was viewed by RENA

Nationalists, it is argued, make ideological use of cultural, historical and geographical features of their territories.⁶⁰ However, in the case of Aragon’s first nationalist entity RENA the focus fell firmly on cultural and historical aspects. Geographical features and natural elements were largely ignored and reference to the Ebro and water was in the context of water transfer and the water related problems that Aragon faced as a result of the water policies of the Franco era. RENA, set up five years after *Andalán* in the last years of the Franco dictatorship, was not a political party but it had a clearly political component in its early phase. Whilst independent of any political group, it functioned as a political platform and lamented the absence of a left-wing Aragonese political force.⁶¹ Similarities can be drawn with the Unión Aragonesista half a century earlier which was not a political party but

⁶⁰ J. Anderson, ‘Nationalism and Geography’, p.119. Smith argues that history and landscape are essential vehicles of nation-building but qualifies this by arguing that their greatest influence is indirect, through the myths and symbols they evoke, Smith, *Ethnic Origin*, p. 200.

⁶¹ At the time of RENA’s inception the adoption of nationalism for a brief period by the reconstituted PSA would not take place until 1979, Hipólito Gómez de las Rocas had still to form CAICA or the PAR and it would be another 13 years before the PAR declared itself nationalist for a short period. It would also be another 8 years before the left-wing nationalist party CHA was set up and a further 9 years before it gained parliamentary seats.

had a political component. An important aspect is that neither had to please an electorate as political parties have to, which can influence policies and views. With the emergence of the CHA in 1985, RENA gave up its political role and dedicated itself to the study of *aragonesismo* and Aragonese culture and in 1990 changed its name to REA to reflect its changing role. However, in the period from 1977 until the CHA gained representation in the Aragonese Regional Parliament in 1995, RENA was an important voice of the Aragonese nationalist left, especially after the final demise of the Partido Socialista Aragonés (PSA) in 1979.⁶²

Although set up in 1977, it was not legalised until 30 July 1980 and, as Peiró pointed out, in these circumstances it took a considerable degree of courage for its founders to present themselves as nationalists and defend Aragon's right to self-determination.⁶³ The creation of RENA marked the first post-war attempt to theorise on the subject of Aragonese nationalism, and the association and its quarterly magazine *Rolde* put forward a nationalist perspective for tackling the problems affecting Aragon and promoting Aragonese culture. In some Spanish territories a nationalist tradition had managed to survive under Franco. However, this was not the case in Aragon where little or nothing was known of the activities of Aragonese nationalism in the period prior to the Civil War. The choice of a nationalist option was therefore something new.

In the absence of a nationalist political party, RENA and its magazine *Rolde* provided an important focal point for nationalist thinking and it was considered that to be an Aragonese nationalist in this period was to belong to RENA.⁶⁴ Thus, RENA and its magazine *Rolde* provide an important source with regard to how the Ebro figured in the nationalist thinking of the period. In the 1970s and 1980s *Rolde* appeared alongside *Andalán*, but rather than being repetitive, produced articles and studies that reflected on different aspects of *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism. For instance, as Peiró, editor of *Andalán* in its third phase and also a

⁶² The PSA had joined with the PSOE 15 months after RENA was set up and much of its time was spent on negotiating this fusion.

⁶³ Antonio Peiró, 'REA y la construcción del aragonesismo', *Rolde* No. 119-20, January - March 2007, pp. 24-31, p. 26.

⁶⁴ Peiró, 'REA y la construcción', p. 30. In 'Rolde como revista política', *Rolde*, 50-51, October 1989-March 1990, pp. 24-27, p. 25 Peiró argues that, 'the role played by the magazine in this period is that of a binding element for Aragonese nationalists which, in the absence of a political organisation they expressed themselves in its pages with full freedom.'

regular collaborator in *Rolde* observed, *Andalán* focused more on the river Ebro and the problems arising from the proposed water transfer whilst *Rolde*, in an attempt to link with and retrieve the *aragonesista* history of the earlier period, focused on the magazine *El Ebro* and studied the writings and activities of the early nationalist movement centred in Barcelona.

In developing its nationalist discourse RENA's main aims were fourfold. Firstly, to raise awareness of aspects of the personality of its 'country', for instance its history, art, economy and culture and, to attempt to revive Aragonese national sentiment through Aragon's institutions, the Cortes, Diputación General and Justicia.⁶⁵ In the pre-autonomic period it is possible to note a more prominent use of the term 'nation' than in the later period. In its writings and statements of aims, RENA used a clear nationalist language employing terms such as 'nation', 'country' and 'our people'. Significantly, analysis of articles published in *Rolde* show, there was an absence of studies relating to Aragon's geography and natural features, the emphasis falling predominantly on its history.⁶⁶ A second aim was to publish material on *aragonesismo* and organise study days to debate Aragonese nationalism. RENA took on the task of transmitting a 'nationalist theory' by means of publications and acts related to the restoration of rights. Unlike the *aragonesista* centre-right, the left has always drawn on the input of many academics and therefore has a greater propensity for academic and theoretical study of *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism. A third aim was reflection on the significance of Aragonese nationalism. With the emergence of the CHA in the mid-1980s, and RENA's diminishing role as a political platform, it immersed itself more in this aspect. From this point on, RENA concentrated on its cultural aims and in theory opened up to *aragonesista* sectors that were not specifically nationalist.⁶⁷ Whilst the nationalist party CHA was not specifically an offshoot of RENA it did share a large amount of ideological ground and one of its first parliamentary deputies and General Secretary, Chesús Bernal, was an active member of the editorial team of RENA. Moreover, the creation of the CHA

⁶⁵ Editorial, *Rolde*, No. 5, January 1979, p. 2, carried the following statement, 'RENA is a cultural body whose aim is the promotion of Aragonese culture from a nationalist view point.'

⁶⁶ See Ignacio Peiró Martín, 'El árbol del Sobrarbe: *Rolde* o la historia aragonesa(ista) como transgresión', in *Rolde de Estudios Aragoneses (1977-2002). Pasar haciendo caminos*, ed. by José Ignacio López Susín, José Luis Melero, Antonio Peiró (Zaragoza: Rolde de Estudio Aragoneses, 2002), pp.123-135 and Luis Antonio Sáez, 'Rolde: Donde la ciencia tiene sentido social' in López Susín et al., *Rolde de Estudios Aragoneses*, pp.137-144.

⁶⁷ Peiró, 'REA y la construcción', pp. 30-31.

was the direct result of a meeting convened by RENA the previous month, and its 'birth' was enthusiastically greeted from the pages of *Rolde*. It is significant that several members of RENA were involved with CHA as similar views on the topic to water and the priority given to certain symbols carried over. RENA was therefore an important precursor to the CHA. Fourthly, like the other *aragonesista* forces at the time, it embarked on the quest of informing the Aragonese people of the 'problems' facing their territory, primarily involving water and the Ebro. In *Rolde* these problems were referred to as 'the situation of prostration in which we find ourselves'.⁶⁸ This aspect had already been taken up in *Andalán* and, as we will see when considering the PAR, raising awareness of Aragon's problems and a view of water and the Ebro as a constant source of worry was not confined solely to the *aragonesista* left.

How the Ebro was viewed in articles and editorials in *Rolde*

Thus, in the early editions of *Rolde*, the Ebro was regarded as part of a serious set of problems facing Aragon. In addition to the proposed transfer of water from the Ebro to Barcelona, *Rolde* also focussed on the proposed siting of nuclear power stations on the Ebro and the construction of new reservoirs in the already exploited Pyrenees. It is clear that the Ebro was regarded as a problem and a worry, rather than a symbol, father-figure or life-giver by the *aragonesista* left, as it had been by the early nationalists in Barcelona, and that the views expressed in *Rolde* were consistent with those of the emergent left-wing political nationalism of the CHA.

Later, in the mid 1990s, new water transfer proposals put forward in the PSOE's draft PHN would once more bring the transfer question to the forefront of several editorials in *Rolde* from a viewpoint of a defence of Aragon's natural resources. Whilst chronologically these editorials belong to a later decade they reflect on the earlier period and are therefore included in this chapter. Structurally, it is necessary to review them here as they are indicative of RENA's position over the course of its existence and RENA is not the subject of later chapters. The editorial of June 1993 summed up RENA's thinking on water transfers, putting forward the argument that

⁶⁸ Editorial, 'Unas elecciones más sin opción aragonesista', *Rolde* No. 36, July-September, 1986, p. 3.

during the last years of the Franco dictatorship the defence of natural resources was an essential factor in binding together the democratic focus in Aragon and was a key to understanding the quest for a statute of autonomy which, amongst other objectives, sought for decisions on such matters to rest with the Aragonese and not with those outside.⁶⁹ Significantly, attention was drawn to the point that whilst the decision to transfer water from the Ebro to Barcelona in 1974 was taken in the absence of a democratic system, even with the reintroduction of such a system little had changed. The arguments put forward in defence of water resources were based on a model of unequal development between regions, the fact that 50 per cent of Aragon is arid and water is needed there, and that wealth should be used where it exists with industries being encouraged to locate there rather than Barcelona. Whilst these arguments contained a strong practical element as opposed to a truly nationalistic one, the point is made that because of its opposition to water transfer Aragon has been presented as a 'monopoliser' of a resource, water, which does not exclusively belong to it whilst 'dry Spain' suffers restrictions, the responsibility for this negative image they argue lies with the state party PSOE. Consequently, the editors argue, this raises the question of whether it makes sense to vote for state parties that favour the transfer of water from the Ebro. This aspect has a more nationalistic, or at least territorial, message pointing out that it is state parties that favour the transfer option in their PHNs.

In more recent years, following the PP proposal set out in its PHN of 2000 to transfer water from the Ebro the water transfer question would again become the topic of several editorials in *Rolde* focused on the fact that Aragon had endured fifty years of threats with regard to water and was now faced with the prospect of more reservoirs to store water for richer areas. Like the CHA, *Rolde's* emphasis is focused on the problem of more reservoirs rather than on the Ebro as either a symbol of identity or patrimonial wealth. If in any way it is seen as a symbol, it is as a symbol of struggle and as part of a defence of territory rather than a symbol of Aragon or the iconography of its landscape that is felt to characterise it or symbolise its culture.

⁶⁹ Editorial, 'Razones para un rotundo NO', *Rolde* No. 63-64, January-June 1993, p. 3. See also Editorial, 'Ni plan de trasvases, ni pacto de embalses', *Rolde*, 70, October-December 1994, p. 3.

In addition to expressing opposition to the PHN and water transfers in editorials REA arranged a conference at the University of Zaragoza bringing together experts from a wide range of disciplines resulting in a publication entitled *El agua a debate* and produced a video *Aragón 1976-2000. La lucha por el agua y el autogobierno* and a pamphlet *Aragón y los aragoneses. Argumentos para el No al trasvase. La historia continúa*.⁷⁰ In recent years it has also sought recourse to technical and scientific arguments to back up its opposition to water transfer.⁷¹

Clearly, the water transfer proposals put forward by Spanish central governments, rather than symbolic attachment to the Ebro brought the transfer question to the forefront of RENA editorials. Without the threat of water transfers, it is questionable whether the Ebro and water would have been a topic of debate in this left-wing nationalist/*aragonesista* publication. It is interesting to note that RENA has associated with the iconography of Aragon's mountains more than the Ebro. Significantly, the new logo chosen by REA in 1991 was based on Aragon's mountains and the orange bars of the Aragonese flag rather than rivers or water. It consisted of a grey triangle, representing the peaks of the mountains of Moncayo, Pyrenees and Albarracín and the letter 'A', representing the first letter of the territory's name. Within the triangle the orange streaks represented the bars of the Aragonese flag. Thus, whilst the logo incorporated Aragonese national landscape it was not that of Aragon's rivers, water or the Ebro. A possible explanation lies in the fact that the Ebro, water and rivers are frequently seen by the left to be associated more with the agricultural sector and the political parties that support it such as the PAR and PP.⁷²

Moreover, especially in its early period, many of the articles in *Rolde* focused on the importance of Aragonese institutions, the figure of the *Justicia* Juan de Lanuza and the preservation and return of items of cultural heritage moved to other parts of Spain by Franco as opposed to Aragon's geography and landscape. It is interesting to note the symbolic importance which, from 1978 onwards, RENA gave to paying tribute to

⁷⁰ Martínez Gil, *El agua a debate* and Carlos Serrano, *Aragón y los aragoneses. Argumentos para el No al trasvase. La historia continúa* (Zaragoza: Publicaciones del REA, 2001).

⁷¹ See for instance Jorge Bielsa and Pedro Arrojo, 'Decálogo de un salto en el vacío. Diez razones económicas contra los planes para la gestión del agua en la cuenca del Ebro', *Rolde*, 75, 1996, p. 14-21.

⁷² Interviews with Chesús Bernal and Bizén Fuster.

Lanuza each year on the 20 December, the anniversary of his execution. In addition, references to the linguistic question and to cultural politics are always present in the pages of *Rolde*, as are references to ecology and the environment.⁷³ Ecological and environmental aspects would increasingly play an important part in the thinking of post-Franco *aragonesista* left-wing associations, political party and press. Also apparent in *Rolde* was the importance placed on forging a link with the figure of Gaspar Torrente and the original *El Ebro* magazine. This included the reproduction of a text by Gaspar Torrente written on the eve of the Congress of Caspe which highlighted the significance that the magazine *El Ebro* would have for post-war Aragonese nationalism.⁷⁴

Analysis shows that the main-lines of left-wing Aragonese nationalism emerging in the post-Franco period do not view the Ebro or water as symbolically significant.⁷⁵ This is probably because Aragonese left-wing intellectuals and political party leaders were not drawn from the discipline of geography, which in Galicia, Germany, Wales had an important bearing on the creation of a national iconography based around natural features of their territory; rather they came from history, art and French Philology. Consequently, left-wing Aragonese nationalism has focused on history, foral law and art and culture and on individuals such as Lanuza, Costa and Gaspar Torrente. When natural features have figured it has been the mountains rather than water or the Ebro which have been employed. Clearly, the Ebro is considered by the left to be more the domain of agrarianism and the centre-right *aragonesista* party PAR as well as a reflection of its close association with the cause of the mountain areas and its ecological opposition to the creation of more large reservoirs and dams (see Chapter 7 on the CHA).

Aragonese intellectuals and the Ebro

Academics and intellectuals, then, played an important part not only in *Andalán* and RENA/REA but also in the diffusion of research on Aragonese history and culture, in the study of *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism and in establishing a link with

⁷³ Peiró, 'REA y la construcción', p. 24.

⁷⁴ Gaspar Torrente, 'Reaparición', *Rolde*, No. 9, June-July 1980, p. 16.

⁷⁵ The Ebro and water are amongst many other symbols but are not the most important. See interviews with Eloy Fernández Clemente and Chesús Bernal.

the earlier nationalist movement. It is important, therefore, to consider this group in more depth as their influence on the weighting given to symbolic aspects such as history and culture is highly significant, especially for left-wing *aragonesismo* with which they were predominantly associated.

Aragonese intellectuals played a vital role in reawakening an interest in Aragonese culture, language and identity in the latter years of the Franco regime, the Transition and the post-Transition periods. They influenced ranking of symbols promoted by the *aragonesista* formations with which they were linked. This section examines how they revived left-wing *aragonesista* formations and political parties and analyses their prioritising role from their positions in academia, the media and politics. First, it considers some theoretical aspects of the importance of intellectuals in nationalism. Next, it focuses on the role of Aragonese intellectuals in raising awareness of Aragonese history, culture and identity during the 1970s and 1980s through the medium of cultural/political associations such as RENA, the review newspaper *Andalán* and popular music. It then addresses their role in prioritising cultural symbols as opposed to symbols of the physical environment and their continuing influence through association with *aragonesista* left-wing cultural formations, the CHA and the *aragonesista* press such as *Rolde* and later *Siete de Aragón*. The question of how the *aragonesista* centre-right's view of the Ebro, which does not have the same level of intellectual influences, differs will be examined in Chapter 6.

Whilst a number of theorists of nations and nationalism have studied the role of intellectuals in nationalism and nationalist movements, these analyses, for the most part, relate to nation-states rather than to sub-state or other types of nationalism. Exceptions to this are Elie Kedourie and Paul Brass's work on colonial societies in Asia and Africa.⁷⁶ In a Spanish context, studies of the role of intellectuals in sub-state nationalisms focus on the so-called 'historical nationalities', Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia. For example, Montserrat Guibernau's study of the role of intellectuals in the re-emergence of Catalan nationalism during the Franco dictatorship and Craig Patterson's work on the Galician intellectuals Ramón Otero

⁷⁶ Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism in Asia and Africa* (London: Weinfeld and Nicolson, 1971); Paul R. Brass, 'Elite Groups, Symbol Manipulation and Ethnic Identity among Muslims of S. Asia' in *Political Identity in South Asia*, ed. by David Taylor and Malcolm Yapp (London and Dublin: Curzon Press, 1979), pp. 35-43.

Pedrayo, Vicente Risco and Castelao in the 1920s and 1930s.⁷⁷ The former highlighting their use of the history, culture, myths, language and specific traits of the group to construct difference, and the latter the emphasis Galician intellectuals placed on the geography of their land and on the discipline of geography. Guibernau's observations show many similarities with the Aragonese case.

Meanwhile, Smith, Kedourie, Breuilly and Nairn recognise the important role of intellectuals as 'the generators of nationalism'.⁷⁸ For Smith, intellectuals are 'educators' and creators, inventors, producers and analysts of ideas, which the intelligentsia then spread.⁷⁹ Unlike Hobsbawm, who stresses the invented nature of nations and nationalism, Smith highlights the 'ethnic origins' of most of the cultural elements used by intellectuals to underpin modern nationalism, arguing that, 'out of the logic of the intellectuals' situation, and their recourse to an ethnic historicism, the cultural basis of the ethnic revival is woven'.⁸⁰ Finally, Smith emphasises the role of intellectuals as generators of ideology and leaders of nationalist movements particularly in their early stages and expresses scepticism about their function once the nationalist movement develops. This is important because as nationalist movements develop they become increasingly involved in politics and the lead then tends to be taken by professional politicians answerable to an electorate. In this situation the influence of intellectuals may diminish. However, in the case of the *aragonesista* left it continued through cultural associations and friendship networks.

Kedourie puts forward the theory that because indigenous intellectuals are excluded from key positions in colonial societies they turn to nationalism drawing attention to the injustices suffered by the population and constructing a nationalist doctrine aimed at eliminating these injustices. The sense of injustice arising from the treatment of peripheral or colonial societies by a central power has some similarities with the case of Aragon. Here controversies surrounding proposals to transfer water from the Ebro to other regions of Spain, exploitation of natural resources and lack of investment in infrastructure and communications have given rise to accusations of 'internal

⁷⁷ See for instance Montserrat Guibernau, 'Nationalism and Intellectuals in Nations Without States: The Catalan Case', *Political Studies*, 48 (2000), 989-1005 and Craig Patterson, 'Galician Cultural Identity', p. 44.

⁷⁸ Guibernau, 'Nationalism and Intellectuals', p. 995.

⁷⁹ Smith, *Ethnic Revival*, p. 109.

⁸⁰ Smith, *Ethnic Revival*, p. 106.

colonialism'. In Kedourie's view, however, the intellectuals' main objective is to gain power in society and halt their alienation and exclusion from positions of privilege, an aspect which is not necessarily applicable to the Aragonese case where, following the reestablishment of democracy, which had been their main concern, most of the intellectuals who had involved themselves in politics returned to academia.⁸¹ Like Kedourie, Breuilly also acknowledges the important role that intellectuals and professionals play in the construction of nationalist ideologies. He argues that 'nationalist ideology has its roots in intellectual responses to the modern problem of the relationship between state and society'.⁸² However, in contrast to Kedourie, he contends that the assertion that 'nationalism should be seen primarily as the search for identity and power on the behalf of displaced intellectuals is a gross exaggeration.'⁸³

Nairn, who takes a Marxist standpoint similar to the contributors to *Andalán* in the 1970s, argues that the emergence of nationalism in deprived areas is a reaction to the uneven spread of capitalism. In order to mobilise the rest of the community and gain their support for the nationalist cause, intellectual elites have to construct a 'militant inter-class community' that shares a common identity, even though its members may only share this identity in a mythical way. In his theory, the support of the masses is crucial for the success of a nationalist movement.⁸⁴ However, a nationalism based on intellectual friendship bonds, as is the case of the *aragonesista* left, can have problems reaching the wider echelons of society. They need to be 'public' intellectuals in a way that few are.⁸⁵

Peter Alter refers to intellectuals as 'the awakeners', a categorization aptly reflecting the role of Aragonese intellectuals in the period surrounding the death of Franco:

Every nation has done its utmost to praise the deeds and merits of the philologists, poets, historians and politicians who substantiated, and in

⁸¹ Interview with Gonzalo Borrás, 28 November 2006, Zaragoza.

⁸² Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*, p. 349.

⁸³ Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*, p. 332.

⁸⁴ See Nairn, pp. 98-9, 339-40 and 101.

⁸⁵ Glen C. Dealy, *The Public Man: An interpretation of Latin American and other Catholic countries* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1977).

most cases successfully asserted, the nation's claim to independence and self-determination...⁸⁶

Joan Cocks argues that intellectuals have historically played a foundational role in a problematical political and conceptual environment associated with the development of nationalist movements. As a result of their formal education and professional training they are the first 'social segment' to absorb ideas of nationhood and values of national self-determination. In addition, they are frequently most sensitive to disadvantage. Cocks' observation that 'as linguists, teachers, journalists, poets, and political philosophers they have generated and disseminated ideas and myths of nationhood' could aptly be applied to the group of Aragonese intellectuals of the 1970s who strove to awaken Aragonese consciousness and aid the return to democracy by their temporary involvement in politics.⁸⁷ Following the reestablishment of democracy, which had been their main concern, most of the intellectuals who had involved themselves in politics returned to academia.⁸⁸

Daniele Conversi highlights the role of intellectuals in giving academic authority to nationalist history by connecting history, geography and culture with national identity. He argues that:

Among the intellectuals a decisive role is played by historians, whose mission is to provide a legitimizing historical perspective as a basis of the national project... Extolling the heroic deeds of past national leaders, they provided the political aims of their own leaders with a historicist justification.⁸⁹

In Aragon the decisive role played by historians meant that geography did not receive the same level of attention as history and culture and hence the lesser degree of importance accorded to landscape and natural features of the territory.

In nations without states, Guibernau argues that the role of intellectuals is fourfold. Firstly, they act as architects of the nationalist movement by providing cultural, historical, political and economic arguments to sustain the distinctive character of the

⁸⁶ Peter Alter, *Nationalism* (London: Edward Arnold, 1989), p. 80.

⁸⁷ Cocks, p. 11.

⁸⁸ Interview with Gonzalo Borrás.

⁸⁹ Daniele Conversi, 'Reassessing Current Theories of Nationalism: Nationalism as Boundary Maintenance and Creation', *Nations and Ethnic Politics*, 1:1, (1995), 73-85 (p. 74).

nation and a legitimization of its will to decide upon its political future. Secondly, the intellectual is the creator of the common myth that guides the revolution. Thirdly, they are formulators of the nationalist ideology. Fourthly, they play a key role in the dissemination of a unified common culture and language, which is essential for the promotion of a sense of community and vital for success. In addition, she maintains that many, although not all act as agitators and mobilisers of the nationalist movement.⁹⁰ To achieve these goals 'at the outset of the nationalist movement, intellectuals study the history, culture, myths, language and specific traits of the group and construct a picture of it as a distinct community.'⁹¹ As the following sections will show, Guibernau's analysis is also highly applicable to the case in Aragon.

In the early 1970s Aragonese intellectuals mainly from the left and made up of university academics, teachers, editors and contributors to progressive journals were instrumental in filling a vacuum in the absence of an Aragonese regionalist or nationalist party and raising awareness and interest in Aragonese history, culture, language and issues of concern to their community; subjects which had been taboo during much of the dictatorship. This group included academics such as Eloy Fernández Clemente, specialist in economic history and founding editor of *Andalán*, Gonzalo Borrás, art history and the history of Aragonese Mudéjar art and architecture, Guillermo Fatás, ancient history, Antonio Beltrán, anthropology, the writer, poet and singer-songwriter José Antonio Labordeta and Aragonese language champion Francho Nagore.

It is important to understand how this group of intellectuals viewed the Ebro and how they represented it in their press and publications to then grasp how their ideas influenced left-wing nationalist thinking. Although *Andalán* made opposition to the transfer of water from the Ebro one of its major points of reference, in contrast to the early *aragonesista* group's symbolic and romantic view of it, its writers defended it as a patrimonial asset and a key to Aragon's future and not specifically as a symbol of Aragon or Aragonese identity. Such differences can be attributed, firstly, to

⁹⁰ Montserrat Guibernau, *Nations without States: Political Communities in a Global Age* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999), pp. 98-100.

⁹¹ Guibernau, *Nations without States*, pp. 98-100.

differences in the role played by intellectuals at the birth and the re-emergence of a territorial or nationalist movement; secondly, as we have seen, to their predominantly left-wing ideological orientation; thirdly, to their prioritising of some symbols as opposed to others and; fourthly, to the existence of a considerably less agriculturally based society, and finally to the existence of a different set of circumstances at a different point in time, namely the prospect of water transfers, a concept which had not been put into practice in the early period. In this respect it is necessary to bear in mind the notion of constant change. As Benedict Anderson and Eve Hepburn point out nationalism has ‘undergone a process of modulation and adaptation according to different eras, political regimes, economies and social structures’ and ‘the nation is a set of ideas or an aspiration to be made and remade’.⁹²

Intellectuals play an important role in the dissemination of common culture, language and sense of community. To this end in the late 1970s and early 1980s, Aragonese intellectuals researched and disseminated numerous studies on Aragonese history, culture, language and topics of particular concern to the community such as the transfer of water, the construction of reservoirs and depopulation and disseminated them through *aragonesista* magazines and newspapers such as *Rolde* and *Andalán* and the newly emergent Aragonese publishing companies. In addition to individual studies, and of considerable cultural significance, La Gran Enciclopedia Aragonesa (GEA) (1980), edited by Fernández Clemente and coordinated by leading Aragonese intellectuals brought together works on Aragon covering a wide spectrum of topics (see Appendix D).⁹³ This work was important in the rediscovery of a sense of Aragonese consciousness and identity and as Fernández Clemente points out was part of a ‘common goal of assigning each people its identity traits’ and was ‘the coming-out of our region’.⁹⁴ He alludes to a quotation from Joaquín Costa to illustrate the encyclopaedia’s purpose of assisting the people of Aragon in the rediscovery of themselves as a people and a community, ‘we needed to get to know ourselves, and we needed to get to know our collective psychology’.

⁹² Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p. 157 and Eve Hepburn, ‘The Neglected Nation: The CSU and the Territorial Cleavage in Bavarian Party Politics’, *German Politics*, 17.2 (2008), 184-202 (185).

⁹³ The encyclopedia was financed by the managing director of UNALI, José María Sáliz, who had affiliations with the PAR.

⁹⁴ ‘Por la Enciclopedia, hacia el aragonesismo’, *Andalán*, No. 248, 14 December 1979, pp. 1, 14.

In the works produced Aragonese intellectuals placed great deal of emphasis on history as a defining feature of Aragón, often at the expense of other elements such as geography. The 1970s saw the emergence of studies of Aragonese history by Fernández Clemente, Carlos Forcadell and Carlos Villanova, together with studies of the early Aragonese nationalist movement in Barcelona, the early twentieth century *aragonesista* press and Joaquín Costa, who, as we have seen, was both an important figure in Aragonese history and an idealised and iconic figure of the early nationalist movement. These studies provided a historicist justification for Aragón's emerging *aragonesista* and nationalist projects.

As we have seen the creation of *Andalán* and the regular contribution of articles and columns by intellectuals was highly significant in creating a sense of Aragonese self-awareness and a definition of *aragonesismo* by bringing together intellectuals from the left-wing and the cultural world and providing them with a vehicle for expression. Its members also participated directly or indirectly in numerous aspects of Aragonese cultural life, publishing dozens of books and the majority taking part in politics, at least in the early years of the transition to democracy thereby contributing to 'giving form to an Aragonese consciousness and an *aragonesista* definition'.⁹⁵ Intellectuals, however, often select and prioritise symbols in accordance with their particular specialist areas and expertise. For instance, in the case of left-wing Aragonese nationalism, the intellectuals associated with the CHA are predominantly historians and art and architecture specialists. The lack of involvement and contributions from *aragonesista* or nationalist orientated geographers could explain the lack of attention on landscape features and landscape iconography as compared with the Galician case for example. This raises the question have its geography, landscape features and organic nationalism been assigned to the realm of symbols associated with the popular imagination as opposed to being symbols of the mainstreams of political *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism. The Ebro is perceived by those interviewed to be an important symbol of the popular imagination although it is not specifically taken up as a symbol or logo of the present day *aragonesista* political parties. This aspect is considered in Chapter 8. Whilst naturalist nationalism may have lost ground as an ideological discourse in

⁹⁵ Eloy Fernández Clemente, cited in Peiró, *El aragonesismo*, p. 111.

aragonesismo and Aragonese nationalism it continued to form part of the popular imagination and finds expression in literature, the media, poetry and popular music.

Popular music played an important role in creating an interest in Aragonese themes and issues after the long period of repression of such topics thereby aiding the intellectuals in their awareness raising activities. Music provides an ideal medium for embracing aspects specific to a particular territory such as its landscape, traditions, language and culture and transmitting these images to a wide audience. It also provides a highly effective vehicle for highlighting grievances and expressing dissatisfaction with social or political conditions. Whether it is a cultural phenomenon or a political vehicle is open to debate. However, in Aragon it carried a clear socio-political message by highlighting *aragonesista* and nationalist themes such as territory, identity and symbols associated with them together with grievances and problems. It is eminently suited for the dissemination of a 'national' message, image, symbolism and myths not only through its lyrics and titles of songs and albums but also through timing of releases, venues of performances and the use of words in the languages of the community.

In Aragon the popular music that emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s was known as *la nueva canción popular aragonesa*. It reflected a high degree of *aragonesista* sentiment and was utilised in conjunction with cultural events in the 'campaign' to recover a sense of regional consciousness. It was spearheaded by one of the intellectuals who belonged to the above group, singer-song writer and later CHA deputy and representative in Madrid, José Antonio Labordeta, and reinforced by other singer song-writers and groups such as Joaquín Carbonell, Pilar Garzón, Tomás Bosque, Ana Martín, Valentín Mairal, Tierra Húmeda, Renaxer and La Bullonera who between them performed in all three languages of Aragon: Aragonese, Catalan and Castilian.⁹⁶ This phenomenon in conjunction with other cultural events and associations made a significant contribution to the recovery of a sense of Aragonese consciousness and identity after the long period of repression under Franco and played a decisive role in creating an interest in Aragonese themes and issues. As Carlos Serrano points out, their recitals in villages and towns

⁹⁶ Royo-Villanova, p. 124.

throughout Aragon went beyond what could be regarded as strictly musical and became an expression of autonomic and democratic grievances and a reflection of themes such as identity, emigration, depopulation and regional inequalities, resulting in Labordeta's songs being regarded as 'a true flag of *aragonesismo*'.⁹⁷ Jesús-Pedro Lorrente noted, 'Aragonese music together with *Andalán* was without doubt one of the pillars of the *aragonesista* rebirth during the Transition years'.⁹⁸

The songs of these singer-song-writers and groups played a vital role in the construction of national identity and in the consolidation of a community as well as highlighting grievances and problems. As scholars of nations and nationalism point out national identity is constructed not only around fellow members of the national community and its shared history, traditions and institutions but also around a 'feeling of connectedness to a particular place or area'.⁹⁹ Identification and affiliation with a particular land or territory, a sense of belonging and an emphasis on the value of home, roots and traditions are of paramount importance in the process and politics of identity construction. Music is an ideal medium for the evocation of 'place' as highlighted in national anthems, official and unofficial hymns and popular music which have an overwhelming tendency to refer to particular places and natural features of a land in their portrayal of the 'nation' and in the articulation of that nation's essence and distinguishing features. This is eminently illustrated by Labordeta's emblematic song *Aragón*, which focuses on the unique combination of natural features that make up the Aragonese territory, its mountains with the Ebro passing through the centre, culminating in the emblematic line, 'Where there is water an orchard'.¹⁰⁰ Popular music is also used to highlight problems and grievances. The songs of Labordeta abound with references to hardships suffered as a result of water scarcity resulting in abandoned land, emigration, an ageing population and despair (see Appendix F). Popular music also provided a highly effective vehicle for highlighting the problem of the proposed transfer of water with La Bullonera's *Hasta aquí hemos llegado*.

⁹⁷ Serrano, 'Aragonesismo entre 1972 y 1982', p. 138.

⁹⁸ Lorente Lorente, p. 503-11.

⁹⁹ Deudney, p. 130.

¹⁰⁰ See Appendix F.

Following in the 1970s tradition popular music would have a prominent place in later anti-transfer demonstration. Singer-songwriters such as Petisme and Carbonell wrote songs in response to the proposals to transfer water contained in the 2000 PHN.¹⁰¹ Together with Labordeta's emblematic *Canto a la libertad*, regarded as Aragon's unofficial anthem, *Aragón* and *Somos* and an array of Aragonese rock, pop and folk groups these songs were performed at demonstrations and at a concert to raise funds for the 11 March 2001 demonstration in Madrid stirring up memories of the 1970s.

Centre-right aragonesismo: the PAR

When the PAR was founded at the end of 1977, by Hipólito Gómez de las Rocas out of the Candidatura Aragonesa Independiente de Centro (CAIC), which he had set up earlier that year, the Ebro and opposition to the transfer of water was one of its distinguishing features. Gómez de las Rocas had entered politics as president of the Diputación Provincial de Zaragoza in the final stage of the Franco period and had opposed the 1974 proposed transfer of water from the Ebro to Barcelona from his position in the Diputación. Whilst some Spanish nationalities chose 'language and autonomy' as their slogans, the PAR focussed on *agua y autonomía* (water and autonomy) and the fusion of these two elements would be central to PAR policy. During the 1970s the positions between the *aragonesista* left and right were not as divided and they are today and shared common ground in relation to how the Ebro and water were viewed namely the desire to raise awareness of Aragon's water-related 'problems', a view of the Ebro and water in terms of regional imbalance and inequalities, as an exploited resource and a source of future prosperity. Gómez de las Rocas' views on the importance of the Ebro and water were reflected in *La autonomía a la vista*, where he wrote that the Ebro was life and hope for the Aragonese and at the same time was also a constant source of worry. In a manner which would become characteristic he switched from the Ebro to the term water, saying that water gives life to Aragon and equally can take it away. Relating this to Aragon's future development, he argued that water is their principal resource on which both industrial and agricultural growth depends.¹⁰² This view would also be

¹⁰¹ For instance Petisme's *Rasmia*, <http://www.gistain.net/zz/zxpetisme.htm> and Carbonell's *Siempre Igual*, <http://www.101lineas.com/carbonell/ca.htm#plp>.

¹⁰² Gómez de las Rocas, *La autonomía*, pp. 252-3.

reflected in the PAR's magazine, *Alcorze*, which came into being in October 1979. An in-depth analysis of the PAR from its inception in 1977 to the present day is undertaken in Chapter 6.

Conclusion

The re-emergence of *aragonesista* tendencies in the 1970s and 1980s saw the emergence of two *aragonesismos*, that of the progressive left and that of a more conservative regionalist centre-right. The *aragonesismo* of the left found expression in *Andalán*, the group of intellectuals that were part of it, the nationalist formation RENA and popular music, all of which provided a bridge to the *aragonesismo* of the nationalist party CHA, set up in 1986. The centre-right *aragonesismo* found expression in the PAR. For the *aragonesismos* that emerged in this period the Ebro and water were viewed in terms of water transfer, unequal exchange, regional imbalance and inequalities and outside exploitation with the left focused on 'internal colonialism' and 'uneven development' arguments and the use of Aragon as a 'region of reserve' for its more developed neighbours and the centre-right on victimisation and injustice in relation to other regions in terms of resource exploitation and the different categorisations assigned to regions in the Spanish constitution of 1978, with some being considered nationalities and some merely regions which would carry with it many economic disadvantages. For both branches water was an integral part of the problems facing Aragon: exploitation of its resources, emigration, rural exodus, territorial imbalance, demographic imbalance and economic development, which they used to create a heightened awareness of Aragonese identity. In addition both viewed the Ebro and water as part of a 'vision of development and future prosperity', the left focused on the opportunity costs of mortgaging the future by committing a determined quantity of water for use in other areas on increased irrigated agricultural land and the vision of the right based primarily on increased irrigated agricultural land in Aragon and a perception of the Ebro and water as life. Whilst both branches of *aragonesismo* were opposed the transfer of water from the Ebro and in the 1970s shared some common ground on the topic of water, as time progressed their reasons for opposing the transfer of water from the Ebro would become quite different with the left moving to a more radical environmental and ecological approach, viewing the Ebro and water in terms of an

‘environmental and sustainable vision’. In addition, they would have very different views on symbols of Aragon, *aragonesismo* and Aragonese identity and thus on the symbolic importance of the Ebro. This will be examined in Chapters 6 and 7.

CHAPTER 6 USE OF THE EBRO BY PRESENT DAY ARAGONESISTA AND NATIONALIST PARTIES: PAR

‘The complexity of nationalism does not lie only or even mainly at the level of conceptualisation. It is also a political phenomenon which is highly ambiguous.’¹

The purpose of Chapters 6 and 7 is to examine the regionalist/nationalist political parties, PAR and CHA, which emerged in the late 1970s and 1980s and to consider how their personalities, characteristics and ‘economic visions’ have affected the ways in which they view the Ebro. Whilst both are Aragonese territorial parties and are opposed to water transfer as set out in central government PHNs they view the Ebro and water from very different perspectives which is reflected in their visions for the future in terms of hydraulic development. This is examined by means of semi-structured qualitative interviews with leading figures of these parties, *aragonesismo* and its press together with textual analysis of their publications.

Aragon’s Regional Parliament is currently made up of three state-wide parties, Partido Popular, Partido Socialista Obrero Español and Izquierda Unida and two territorial-based *aragonesista* parties, Partido Aragonés, formed in 1977, and Chunta Aragonesista formed in 1986, which between them take around a quarter of the vote in regional elections (See Appendix H). The PAR has had parliamentary representation since the end of the 1970s; however the CHA, which emerged later, did not gain seats until 1995. The centre to centre-right PAR, was originally a ‘regionalist’ party, for a period in the 1990s, was regarded as ‘moderate nationalist’ and more recently as *aragonesista*; the left-wing CHA is referred to as a ‘nationalist’ party. However, a considerable degree of ambiguity surrounds the use of these terms both by analysts and on occasions by the parties themselves. The PAR subscribes to a territorial ideology based on Aragonese land, people and interests whereas the main pillars of the CHA’s ideology are *aragonesismo*, federalism, socialism and environmentalism. Thus, the political *aragonesismo*/Aragonese nationalism of the post-Franco period has not been unitary and homogeneous but parallelist, with two

¹ Cocks, *Passion and Paradox*, p. 9.

distinct ‘faces’. The aspiration of the early *aragonesista* group in Barcelona for an *aragonesismo* that could rise above left-right divisions has never been a reality in the post Franco period. On occasions there may have been possibilities for unification, however, these moments passed or the individuals favouring such action moved out of power.² Both of these post Franco *aragonesista* positions combine the Ebro with *aragonesismo* but, as we will see, view it in totally different ways, the positions appearing to converge when there is a threat to the Ebro but diverging when there is not.

Origins

When the PAR was founded at the end of 1977, by Hipólito Gómez de las Rocas out of the Candidatura Aragonesa Independiente de Centro (CAIC), set up earlier that year, the Ebro and opposition to the transfer of water was one of its distinguishing features. Although originally very *españolista* and mindful of preserving the unity of Spain the PAR was strongly opposed to the creation of further inequalities between regions, through the distinction made between ‘regions’ and ‘nationalities’ in the Constitution and the creation of two routes to autonomy, a ‘fast route’ under Article 151, for the so-called historical nationalities, Catalonia, Basque Country, Galicia and a ‘slow route’ under Article 143 for the rest, with the exception of Andalusia which followed the ‘fast route’.³ Later, in the 1990s, the PAR defended Aragon as a nationality and demanded a level of autonomy equal to that of the ‘historical’ regions. It argues that because these regions were given more devolved powers and increased budget which allow them to carryout infrastructure works, economic promotion and invest more in industry, research, employment and technology they are in a better position to compete for and capture investments.⁴

In its early days the PAR was strengthened by the break up of the Unión de Centro Democrático (UCD), although paradoxically some of the UCD’s principal members had previously blocked Aragon’s access to full autonomy by the ‘fast route’, which

² Interview with Eduardo Vicente de Vera, Zaragoza, 5 November 2008.

³ See Hipólito Gómez de las Rocas, *La autonomía a la vista*, pp. 21, 82, 86.

⁴ See Eiroa, *Razones y retos*, p. 19.

the PAR had fought for.⁵ Former UCD deputies who joined the PAR in 1981 were Juan Antonio Bolea, a firm defender of the 'fast route' access, José Ángel Biel and Román Alcalá, who brought with them a wealth of political experience and widened the PAR's electoral base, Bolea having served as Aragon's first president in the pre-autonomous period, 1978-81. It has been argued that the PAR evolved at the pace of the grievances suffered by Aragon, and that the growth of an *aragonesista* feeling directly benefited it, with the result that it formed several autonomous governments.⁶ Throughout its existence the PAR has been in constant competition with the PP for the centre-right ground and, following the emergence of the CHA in 1986, has faced competition from another territorial-based *aragonesista* party.

In the nine legislatures since 1983, the PAR has been part of 6 coalition governments, forming a minority government 1987-1991 with the initial support of the Alianza Popular (AP) and later governing in conjunction with both the PP and the PSOE.⁷ It has twice held the Presidency of Aragon under Hipólito Gómez de las Rocas (1987-1991) and Emilio Eiroa García (1991-1993). Following the 1987 Regional Election it took on the responsibility of government with only 19 deputies when the PSOE was unwilling to form a government, which carried with it considerable risks if the other parties refused to collaborate with it, which in fact did occur. The PAR, with the support of the AP, controlled 32 out of 67 seats and the Cortes was constituted without an absolute majority. The support of the AP reached crisis point in 1989 resulting in the presentation of a vote of no-confidence in Gómez de las Rocas. He had been invested as president with the votes of the PAR (19), PP (12) and the abstention of the Centro Democrático y Social (CDS) (6), with votes against from the PSOE (27) and IU (1). In spite of PP demands to form part of the government Gómez de las Rocas formed a single-colour PAR government. In 1989, after entering into a new pact with the PP he brought two of their deputies into the

⁵ The UCD was formed as a political coalition in May 1977 and as a centre political party in August 1977 under the leadership of Adolfo Suárez. It governed Spain from 1977-1982. It was dissolved in 1983 due to internal conflicts. In 1981 Suárez was replaced by Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo and formed the Centro Democrático y Social (CDS) which competed with the UCD in the 1982 elections. He was President of the CDS until 1991.

⁶ Jesús J. Sebastián Lorente, 'Nacionalismo y aragonesismo', *Siete de Aragón*, 13-19 January 1995, p. 10-11.

⁷ Alianza Popular (AP), a conservative party formed in 1976, was the forerunner of the PP. When the UCD was dissolved in 1983 much of its electoral base moved to the AP. In 1989 it joined with other conservative formations to form the Partido Popular (PP).

government, Santiago Lanzuela (Economy) and José Urbieto (Agriculture). However, the crisis within the coalition continued and Gómez de las Rocas faced a vote of no-confidence which he won with the votes of those who had originally supported his investiture plus 1 vote from a deputy from the Grupo Mixto. In 1991, he declined to carry on the Presidency in a coalition with the PP, and passed it over to Emilio Eiroa, with each party taking charge of 4 ministries.

Eiroa's Presidency was important in Aragon's autonomic and hydraulic history as it saw the enactment of the Pacto del Agua 1992 and mass social mobilization in favour of increased autonomy and against the proposed water transfer in the form of large-scale demonstrations in the Plaza de Pilar on 23 April 1992 and 1993 which created a heightened sense of Aragonese national awareness particularly surrounding the issues of water, increased autonomy and identity. As Brass points out mobilization as a result of resources and lost opportunities can convert communities into nationalities.⁸ The years of the Eiroa presidency are highly significant in terms the development of symbolic and nation-building aspects of the Ebro through popular mobilisation and press communications and the development of a nationalist project for Aragon. The objective of this project is described by Eiroa as 'the reconstruction of an Aragonese identity as the only way to develop and progress our society'.⁹ In this context of identity construction the Ebro was viewed in a more symbolic way than previously as one of Aragon's identity traits. Eiroa left office in 1993 at the height of the water transfer controversy surrounding the PSOE draft PHN 1993 following a motion of censure which the PSOE won as a result of the support of a PP defector, Emilio Gomaríz, which shifted the balance of power in its favour. This was beneficial to the PSOE both in Aragon and nationally as the PAR's anti-transfer stance and its resolution presented in the Senate against its draft PHN 1993 had prevented it being passed in the Spanish Cortes Generales. Eiroa argued that the censure motion was brought against his government to prevent Aragon consolidating a nationalist project and as a result of Felipe González's fears of the political instability that Aragon's autonomic and hydrological grievances could produce.¹⁰ In the 1995 elections, the PSOE once again held the highest number of parliamentary

⁸ Brass, 'La formación de las naciones', p. 70-71.

⁹ Eiroa, *Razones y retos*, p. 56. See also *Un proyecto para los 90*, p. 55.

¹⁰ Eiroa, *Razones y retos*, p. 71.

seats, 30, but a PP-PAR coalition, with 17 seats each, meant that this coalition formed the government. Later, in 1999, after disputes with the PP and a decline in electoral popularity, which the PAR blamed on the PP, the PAR entered into coalition with the PSOE for the subsequent two legislatures, holding the Vice-presidency of the Government (José Ángel Biel) and the Presidency of the Cortes (José Maria Mur) and occupying four ministries including Environment.

Thus, the PAR is regarded as a *partido bisagra* (a hinge party), ensuring the stability of the region's government through its coalitions, and as a result has been in a position to cast its influence on government. This policy of pacts has, however, had detractors in the higher echelons of the party, notably Gómez de las Rocas, as demonstrated by his refusal to continue as president in 1991. The PAR's quest for political power has to some extent detracted from the formation of a true *aragonesista* movement as it has had to make sacrifices to accommodate its coalition partners and remain in power. This is illustrated by its apparent support of the 2008 mini water transfer to Barcelona when it had always been a steadfast opponent of such policies.

To date, the CHA has not been part of the region's government and was aggrieved that the PSOE formed a coalition with the PAR in 2003, rather than with itself, another socialist-orientated party which had a greater share of the vote. The PAR's proven success in coalition governments and the CHA's frequent criticism of the PSOE obviously played a part in this choice.

Denomination / ideology

The PAR has been placed in a variety of different categories by analysts and academics which, it could be argued, reflects its position at distinct moments in time which in turn affect how the Ebro is viewed with a more symbolic aspect emerging in the period when it adopted moderate nationalism. Categorisations are by no means static due to the vicissitudes of autonomous development and doctrinal shifts within the party. Xosé-Manoel Núñez argued that parties such as the PAR are to a certain extent 'a new incarnation' of the pre-war regional movements. According to Núñez they reflect some characteristics of the historical regionalism of the first third of the

twentieth century and emerged in response to the post 1975 situation, that is to say the Spanish State of Autonomous Regions.¹¹ He views their emergence as a kind of chain-reaction caused by an imitation effect produced in response to peripheral nationalisms.¹² Whilst it is true to say that the PAR emerged in response to the post 1975 situation, rather than an ‘imitation effect’ its emergence could more aptly be described as a response in defence of Aragonese interests, particularly in the face of the Ebro-Pirineo Oriental water transfer proposal in 1974, and in the quest for Aragon to be treated in the same way as its more powerful neighbours.

In the 1990s, at the time of the PAR’s shift to moderate nationalism, López-Laborda, Pinilla and Sáez classified parties such as it as ‘strategic nationalists’ and the CHA as ‘cultural nationalists’.¹³ They defined the former as those whose priority is not to strengthen the cultural community but rather to offer electors a specific product, ‘nationalism’, as a means of obtaining and consolidating power. Conversely, they defined ‘cultural nationalists’ as those who wish to emphasise and stimulate the main differences of a given cultural community, for instance Aragonese-ness or Canarian-ness. Groups included in this category range from those who do not reject integration into the Spanish Community, those who favour a federal state to those who claim full political independence. They maintained that, in general, ‘strategic nationalists’ occupy centre or right-wing positions while ‘cultural nationalists’ adhere to a left-wing ideology.¹⁴ The left/right dichotomy and the basic characteristics associated with these positions are paramount when considering the positions taken by PAR and CHA in their defence of Aragonese water resources and opposition to the transfer of water from the Ebro. Namely, left-wing parties are frequently lay organisations and reject association with religious symbols, and consequently the quasi-religious Pilar-Ebro association while parties to the right are frequently rural and agrarian in focus and view water and the Ebro in terms of agricultural development. In reality, however, neither of these types of nationalism can be found in a pure state in the Aragonese territorial parties. Elements of both can

¹¹ Xosé-Manoel Núñez, ‘What is Spanish Nationalism Today? From Legitimacy Crisis to Unfulfilled Renovation (1975-2000)’, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 24 (2001), 719-52 (p. 734).

¹² Xosé-Manoel Núñez, ‘Autonomist Regionalism within the Spanish State of the Autonomous Communities: An interpretation, in *Identity and Territorial Autonomy in Plural Societies*, ed. by William Safran and Ramón Maíz (London: Frank Cass 2000), pp. 121-41 (p. 127).

¹³ López-Laborda et al., p. 4.

¹⁴ López-Laborda et al., pp. 4 -5.

be found in their ideological postulates and the objectives that go with them do not coincide with reality, at times appearing dislocated and inverted.¹⁵

To a large extent, ambiguity regarding classification of the PAR as a regionalist or nationalist party arises from the fact that the party has evolved considerably from the distinctly regionalist and conservative stance of its inception in 1977. As a result many of those who more recently joined the ranks of the PAR, its electorate or youth organisation, Rolde Choben, would not consider themselves heirs of the party that emerged in the late 1970s and proclaimed a *regionalismo españolista*.¹⁶ In addition, the PAR has not always maintained doctrinal consistency as demonstrated by its willingness to uphold nationalist tenets and identify with moderate nationalism.¹⁷ This may be due partly to the need to occupy a political space of its own, as distinct from the state-based PP which occupies a similar ideological position, partly to political opportunism in its quest for political power and partly to the beliefs of various factions within it. The beginning of its evolution from its origins as a distinctly regionalist party can be seen in propaganda produced in the 1986 election campaign which saw a shift from previous conservative slogans to, *Votar PAR La Fuerza de Aragón*. The evolution of its youth organisation, the Rolde Choben, towards a more nationalist stance was even more marked.¹⁸ This resulted in its identification with nationalism and a fervent defence of the Aragonese language. Parallel to this there was also an attempt at an ideological shift. In its V Congress in November 1986, the PAR defined Aragon as a nationality, although it rejected self-determination. At its VI Congress in 1990 its regionalist line was subject to change when its new President José Maria Mur defined himself as a nationalist and the term 'nationalism' was included in its Statutes in February 1990,. In addition, its name was changed to Partido Aragonés, dropping the term *Regionalista* (although retaining the acronym PAR).¹⁹ Moreover, in its quest for greater decentralisation and equity

¹⁵ Jesús J. Sebastián Lorente, 'Estrategia y discurso aragonesista', *Siete de Aragón*, No. 53, 17-23 March 1995, p. 10.

¹⁶ Peiró, 'El aragonesismo', p. 64.

¹⁷ Núñez, 'Autonomist Regionalism', p.134 points out that according to the party's founder Gómez de las Rocas there was no difference between regionalist and nationalist parties, so long as they were not in favour of secession. He argues that the PAR's doctrinal inconsistency also stems from the fact that in its attempts to 'invent a historical heritage' it has included a wide range of forerunners from the 'Aragonese lobby of enlightened absolutism in the eighteenth century to the nationalist ideologists of the 1920s and 1930s' such as Gaspar Torrente.

¹⁸ See Peiró, 'El aragonesismo', p. 61.

¹⁹ Peiró, 'El aragonesismo', p. 61.

with the so-called ‘historical nationalities’, the PAR demonstrated its willingness to uphold nationalist tenets by seeking official recognition of Aragon as a historical nationality. This was achieved in 1996 and reflected in the amended Statute of Autonomy of that year.²⁰ Whilst this may have been a form of strategic nationalism dictated by political opportunism described by López-Laborda et al. the presence in *Alcorze* of frequent debates on the topic of nationalism at this time shows the presence in the party of a faction that supported a nationalist ideology.²¹ Furthermore, it is by no means coincidental that the onset of the evolution towards a more nationalist stance coincided with the emergence onto the political scene of the CHA and its offer of a left-wing Aragonese party of a nationalist denomination. However, despite its defence of Aragon as a nationality and its willingness to uphold nationalist tenets, the nationalist element within the PAR has had to tread carefully in order to avoid a rupture with the more conservative or regionalist sectors that continued to occupy a significant place within the party. Consequently, at its January 1996 Conference it was forced to abandon the term ‘nationalist’.²² Following an electoral decline in March 2000 it convened its first special congress and opted for a more conservative stance and selected its current President José Ángel Biel.

If we define ‘nationalists’ in the Spanish context of those who would form, or would have no objections to forming a separate state within or without an Iberian/Spanish federation, then the PAR would not fall into this category. Ultimately, however, we have to accept a party’s own nomenclature and policy statements as an indication of its regionalist or nationalist orientations. In this respect in the early period the PAR could be classified as regionalist, in the period between the late 1980s and 1990s as occupying a position mid-way between regionalism and nationalism as demonstrated by its dropping of the term *Regionalista* from its title and its description of its policies in the period 1987-1993 as, ‘the evolution of a regionalism towards a moderate and progressive *aragonesista* nationalism’.²³ More recently, however, it has tended to avoid the use of both terms referring to itself simply as an *aragonesista*

²⁰ In its 1982 Statute of Autonomy, Aragon was referred to as an ‘historic entity and identity’ without calling it either a region or a nationality [on-line] <http://igsap.map.es/cia/dispo/est-aragon.htm> [accessed 15/6/02]. In the amended 1996 Statute of Autonomy it is referred to as a ‘nationality’. [on-line] <http://wzar.unizar.es/dof/autonomia/prelinar.html> [accessed 15/11/00].

²¹ For debates on nationalism in *Alcorze* see period 1987-1992, Nos. 80, 82, 84, 85, 93, 98, 100, 101 and 109.

²² Núñez, ‘Autonomist Regionalism’, p. 134.

²³ Untitled document [on-line] <http://www.partidoaragones.es/PAR/historia.htm> [accessed 25/11/00].

party. The shift towards moderate nationalism is significant as it marked a period when a more nationalistic approach was taken to the symbolic and identity aspects of the Ebro and in the context of the 23 April 1993 demonstration to reinforcement of the notion of an Aragonese collective imagination that identifies with *el Pilar* as the ‘column of Aragon’ and the Ebro as the father and future of the community, Eiroa highlighting the fact that the demonstration would take place in the surroundings of ‘Father Ebro, symbol of what we want to be and of Aragon’s future wealth’, the Father Ebro symbolism reminiscent of that of the early *aragonesista* group.²⁴ As Kertzer points out mass demonstrations must take place in symbolic locations otherwise they lose much of their meaning.²⁵ Nevertheless, with the exception of this highly charged period there is an element of ambiguity as to whether it is the Ebro or water that is the central element of Aragonese identity. For instance, in *Razones y retos* Eiroa states, ‘in Aragon water is much more than an economic or social resource: it is the central symbol of our identity’ having referred specifically to the Ebro as the identity trait in other documents.²⁶

Essence of the party / ideology

The PAR was founded with three fundamental beliefs, ‘defence of water, defence of full autonomy and to give a touch of *aragonesismo* to the whole democratic process in Aragon’.²⁷ At its I Congress in January 1978 it set out its aim of providing Aragon with ‘a political force capable of assuring an efficient management of its autonomy and of influencing in the national life of Aragon without external allegiances’.²⁸ From the beginning defence of water was one of its principal characteristics and has remained so throughout its existence. This is referred to by Biel as ‘the defence of water as Aragon’s driving force’.²⁹

As we have seen, whilst some Spanish nationalities opted for ‘language and autonomy’ as their slogan, the PAR chose ‘water and autonomy’ (*agua y*

²⁴ Guillén Pardos, *Aragón comunidad imaginada*, pp. 76.

²⁵ Kertzer, p. 120.

²⁶ Eiroa, *Razones y retos*, p. 36. See also Emilio Eiroa García, ‘Sobre las lenguas de Aragón’, *Alcorze*, No. 103, October-November 1990, pp. 3-4 and *Un proyecto para los 90*, p. 55.

²⁷ Interview with Emilio Eiroa.

²⁸ Gran Enciclopedia Aragonesa, ‘Partido Aragonés’, http://www.encyclopedia-aragonesa.com/voz.asp?voz_id=9819&voz_id_origen=1208 [accessed 10/12/09].

²⁹ José Ángel Biel, ‘Es el momento de la unidad’, *Alcorze*, October 2001, p. 3.

autonomía): the importance placed on this binomial partnership being reflected in the predominance of references to water as opposed to the Ebro in its publications. The 1970s saw a fusion of these two elements that would be central to PAR policy from then on. In the 1970, the awakening of autonomist awareness ran parallel to the rejection of the water transfer to Barcelona. Later, in the early 1990s, demonstrations against the proposed water transfer to the east coast regions of Catalonia, Valencia and Murcia put forward in the Draft PHN 1993 went hand-in-hand with demonstrations against the PSOE-PP Pacto Autonómico under the slogan, *Por la autonomía plena y contra los trasvases*. In October 2000 opposition to the PP's PHN 2000 which also proposed to transfer water to Catalonia, Valencia and Murcia united under the slogan *Aragón, agua y futuro*. In January 2002, on its twenty-fifth anniversary, Biel highlighted the PAR's major successes as its struggle against the transfer of water from Aragon, reform of its Statute of Autonomy, and recognition of Aragon as a 'nationality'. With regard to objectives for the future he pointed to a continued quest for full autonomy and defence of Aragon's resources.³⁰ Autonomy and water have always been the central themes of the PAR policy.

In theory the PAR is closer to the early *aragonesista* vision of an *aragonesismo* that would rise above left-right divisions although in practice tends to attract a centre-right label. It has presented itself as a centre or 'general' party and at its V Congress in 1986 posed the question, 'what would be the purpose of a regionalist party (defender of everything regional) that at the same time declared itself to be right or left-wing?'.³¹ Its message has been interclass: water and autonomy are not the preserve of any class in particular and it has launched its campaigns with a message that is not exclusive arguing that 'to construct Aragon is a common project that does not comprise class or ideologies'.³² Whilst the PAR is sometimes accused of not having an ideology, this would appear to be a conscious decision to attract the maximum following possible. According to Biel the PAR is a 'convergence party, open to all who wish to construct Aragon from here. The right and the centre appear to me to be labels that do not serve to identify the Aragonese social reality'.³³

³⁰ 'El PAR cumple 25 años', *Heraldo*, 24 January 2002, p. 2.

³¹ V Congreso de Partido Aragonés Regionalista, II Ponencia, Ideología del P.A.R., 6 October 1986, p. 4.

³² Manifiesto San Jorge 99.

³³ Interview with José Ángel Biel, *Siete de Aragón*, 18 Feb-10 March, 2002, pp. 4-6 (p. 6).

However, it is seen by its opponents and other actors interviewed as being on the right of the political spectrum and associated with the agrarian sector. Those close to the PAR maintain that it is made up of elements that range from the far left to the far right. Its centre stance would therefore appear to be a mid-point between the two rather than a defined space in itself and this could explain its doctrinal swings.

The PAR defines itself as a 'territorial party' and has remained consistent with its foundational and fundamentally territorial 'ideology' which is illustrated by the following statements: 'the land and our people are our ideology; Aragon is our party; the PAR was founded to give expression to Aragon's interests; the objective of the PAR: Aragon; and this land more than ever needs its own voice which defines it and identifies it and should make it respected in the Spanish state'.³⁴ As these statements show the PAR's 'ideology' is based totally in Aragon. Its understanding of *aragonesismo* is defined by Biel as, 'to give priority to the Aragonese reality, to serve the interests of the community before any other. To put into daily practice the idea that Aragon comes first'.³⁵ The idea that Aragon comes first underlies its argument in relation to the Ebro and water that the needs of Aragon should be met first before considering transfer. Whilst it has had periods in which it has embraced regionalism and moderate nationalism neither of these 'isms' are used as an ideological base of the PAR, rather its 'ideology' has remained the defence of Aragonese interests by a territorial party that does not have outside interests. Consequently, in line with this 'ideology' its view of the Ebro and water is primarily economic as opposed to ethno-symbolic, patrimonial and identity although in the years of the Eiroa presidency there was an attempt to harness the more symbolic and nation-building aspects of the Ebro and in recent years there has been a tendency to introduce a more essential and primordial way of viewing the Ebro, linking it to all aspects of Aragonese life, past, present and future.

Thus, as a result of its essence as a party set up primarily to defend Aragon's territorial and economic interests rather than as a true ethno-regionalist or cultural nationalist party, for the most part, the PAR has not developed the kind of ethno-symbolic, iconographic or identity view of the Ebro or elements its landscape

³⁴ '20 años hacienda Aragón', *Alcorze*, December 1997, p. 1.

³⁵ Interview with José Ángel Biel, *Siete de Aragón*, 18 Feb-10 March, 2002, pp. 4-6 (p. 6).

referred to by the theorists of nationalism. The Ebro has been seen largely in terms of economic development, grievance, regional inequality with only brief incursions into symbolic, identity and essential aspects.

Personalities / networks / intellectuals

The leading figures of the PAR have predominantly been professional politicians and the party is supported by a 'clientism' that goes with political power. It does not have the intellectual and associative aspect that is characteristic of the CHA. Whilst the CHA actively supports the study of *aragonesismo* and Aragonese culture, history and language the PAR does not have this academic research element. Nevertheless, in recent years views expressed by the PAR Vice-President of the Aragonese Government, Minister for the Environment and Director of the Instituto Aragonés del Agua on water-related themes which promote a view of water as part of Aragon's essence, identity, history and culture have found expression in numerous institutional and press-backed publications and forewords to books, along with contributions from selected academics and figures at the forefront of public opinion.³⁶ This promotion of water as part of Aragon's essence bears similarities to arguments put forward by theorists of nations and nationalism that natural elements are frequently accorded a key role in the representation of the qualities of the nation and its essence and as repositories of collective memories. The promulgation of this more essential image of the Ebro may have been a result of the build-up to the Expo 2008, further research is therefore necessary to determine whether this continues.

For two decades Hipólito Gómez de las Rocas, the founder and principal mentor of the PAR, was one of the most important politicians in Aragon. He was president of the Diputación Provincial de Zaragoza and a deputy in Congress first representing the Candidatura Aragonesa Independiente de Centro (CAICA) in 1977 and subsequently the PAR in 1979, 1982 and 1986. He was the second of Aragon's presidents in the Democratic period 1987-1991. During his period at the forefront the PAR took a distinctly regionalist-autonomist line. His views on the Ebro are

³⁶ See for instance Gobierno de Aragón, *Aquaria. Agua, territorio y paisaje en Aragón* (Zaragoza: Gobierno de Aragón: Diputación Provincial de Zaragoza, D. L. 2006) and Gobierno de Aragón, *Aragón: El libro del agua* (Zaragoza: Instituto Aragonés del Agua, 2007).

expressed in *La autonomía a la vista* where he wrote, ‘for us the Ebro is life and hope; at the same time it is a daily worry ...’ switching to the term water to conclude, ‘water gives us life and can also take it away from us.’³⁷

Other figures include Juan Antonio Bolea Foradada, Aragon’s first President in the pre-autonomous period, 1978-1981, Emilio Eiroa García, Secretary General in various periods and President of the Aragonese Government 1991-93, in the period in which the PAR embraced moderate nationalism, José María Mur Bernad President of PAR 1987-2000 and President of the Cortes de Aragón 1999-2003 who declared himself a ‘nationalist of faith’, and the more conservative José Ángel Biel Rivera, current president of the party and Vice-President of the Aragonese Government. With the exception of Mur all have legal backgrounds. Bolea is an expert on the irrigation communities of Aragon, writing his doctoral thesis on the *Régimen jurídico de las Comunidades de regantes*.³⁸ He was also the author of *Los riegos de Aragón* and was closely involved with PAR’s water policy and opposition to water transfers in the late 80s.³⁹ Its views on irrigation were summed up by Bolea, ‘the culmination of Aragon’s basic irrigation projects is an urgent task. Its completion is a basic condition for getting on the road to development in vast areas of our land’.⁴⁰ A meeting/interview was held with Bolea but he declined to be recorded or give in-depth comments on how the Ebro was viewed by the PAR. An interview was also sought with José Ángel Biel in the period just prior to the run-up to the Elections of 2007 in which he stood for President of Aragon and Mayor of Zaragoza, however, he elected to substitute Alfredo Boné, the PAR Environment Minister.

Thus, whilst defining itself as a centre party the PAR has incorporated individuals from across the political spectrum and has adopted positions ranging from regionalist to nationalist to *aragonesista*. Those who served alongside Gómez de las Rocas in the early days of the party are regarded as regionalists, those who figured in the government of Eiroa as strategic or constitutional nationalists and the more recent

³⁷ Hipólito Gómez de las Rocas, *La autonomía*, pp. 252-3.

³⁸ Juan Antonio Bolea Foradada, ‘Régimen jurídico de las comunidades de regantes’ (Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Zaragoza, 1968).

³⁹ Juan Antonio Bolea Foradada, *Los riegos de Aragón*, 2nd edn, (Huesca: Grupo Parlamentario Aragonés Regionalista de las Cortes de Aragón, D. L. 1986). At a conference entitled ‘El Ebro y su remodelación’ in 1989 Bolea spoke on ‘El Ebro, el gran olvidado de Aragón’, highlighting the importance that water could have for the future of Aragon.

⁴⁰ *Heraldo*, Especial Pilar, 12 October 1994, p. 10.

group centred on Biel as conservatives and *aragonesistas*. As a consequence of such diversity, the PAR has been subject to a series of internal divisions resulting most noticeably in differing positions regarding its policy on pacts and the ideological redefinition attempted in the 1990s. As a result of these positions in the early period defence the Ebro was referred to in terms of regional development and regional inequalities and later as part of a nationalist or *aragonesista* perception of future economic development and part of its project for the future. However, whilst there are clearly ideological differences within party, its position with regard to defence of water and Aragonese interests has remained constant over the years thus suggesting that the perspective of the party on this issue is not so much influenced by individuals and their priorities, as it is with the CHA, but is one of their foundational principles. In addition, unlike the CHA, it does not reflect intellectual influences, being grounded in a more solid political base and being more utilitarian.

How the Ebro is viewed in *Alcorze* and other party documents

The PAR's official magazine *Alcorze* and its Día de San Jorge Manifestoes, prepared for an occasion which has considerable symbolic meaning for Aragon and published in the press and for the most part in *Alcorze*, are a valuable source of how the party view water and the Ebro. *Alcorze* began publication in October 1979. In its early phase it appeared on a monthly basis as a way of keeping followers informed of party policy and events, however, in recent years with the advent of the Internet, editions of the magazine have become infrequent.⁴¹ In the early editions a sense of duality with Spain and Spanish nationalism was very strong whilst at the same time the PAR's objective of fighting for Aragonese interests and equity with other regions, particularly the so-called historical nationalities of Catalonia, Basque Country and Galicia, is equally strong. The claim that Aragon is a historical nationality put forward in the first edition would appear to arise out of the struggle for equal treatment rather than as a statement of cultural distinctiveness. However, as the PAR's struggle to achieve recognition of this status for Aragon intensified in the 1990s in the period running up to the approval of a new Statute of Autonomy, it is

⁴¹ *Alcorze* 'means short-cut, the shortest route, reduction of space... We have chosen the word because of this. The PAR is in favour of the direct and definite route, for clarity. It wishes to arrive first, to go directly, for the most direct route without ambiguities even though it may be an uphill struggle', *Alcorze*, October 1979, p. 3.

clear that it now defended a conceptualisation of Aragon as a 'historic nationality'. It is possible to detect in the letters and opinions published in the magazine that a section of the party had clearly moved towards a nationalist doctrine.

The way in which the Ebro and water, with the emphasis falling predominantly on water, were viewed in *Alcorze* falls into six main categories: first, it is seen in terms of grievance, exploitation, regional inequalities and the need to defend Aragon's natural wealth, with water viewed as its principal wealth; second as a permanent worry as a result of central government proposals to transfer water to other regions; third, as a source of regional development and a means of economic development and future for Aragon; fourth as life and the essence of the territory; fifth, as a 'symbolic space' of Aragon's identity and finally, as part of Aragon's natural heritage. There is only occasional reference specifically to the Ebro. Here it is seen as an element of Aragonese identity and a symbolic place. The term water is used most frequently. The emphasis placed on each of the aforementioned categories varies according to chronology, the immediacy of water transfer threats and an evolution of ideas, for instance, the shift to nationalism.

Firstly, in 1979 and throughout the 1980s references to water fall overwhelmingly within the category of regional inequalities, grievance, exploitation and the right to defend natural wealth, with water viewed as Aragon's principal wealth. In the second edition, for instance, the proposed Ebro-Pirineo Oriental transfer is seen as part of the regional inequalities problem in which Catalonia would be the beneficiary of 'abundant central government financial resources that would ensure increased employment there and emigration in Aragon as a result of lack of employment'. The PAR argued that the transfer should be opposed as it would deprive the Ebro river basin of water.⁴² The statement is interesting in that it illustrates how defence of Aragonese interests and those of the river basin as a whole are not viewed as contradictory and the idea of 'our water' and the concept of the river basin as a whole were not seen as conflicting.⁴³ There is reference to 'the right to defend our

⁴² 'El pleno extraordinario contra el trasvase', *Alcorze*, November 1979, p. 11.

⁴³ Hipólito Gómez de las Rocas pointed to the popular view that although the Ebro passes through numerous Spanish regions it 'comes of age' in Aragon because of the rivers that flow down from the Pyrenees and enrich it. This idea he points out is popularised in a *jota*. Guillermo Fatás also pointed out that when the Ebro is a 'mature' river it is linked to the image of Aragon and to the

wealth (human and material) in the face of emigration’, reference to the fact that if water is transferred to create jobs in other areas people will move to the developing areas for work thereby adding to Aragon’s depopulation problem.⁴⁴

Secondly, as in *Andalán*, water is seen as a permanent worry rather than a symbol and, one of a series of problems facing Aragon in the post-Franco period.⁴⁵ At this time the postures between the left and right were not as pronounced as they are today and shared a degree of common ground in relation to how the Ebro and water were viewed as the previous chapter demonstrates. Emigration and central government’s proposal to transfer water from the Ebro were seen as pressing problems for Aragon. The Día de San Jorge Manifiesto 1985, reproduced in *Alcorze*, focussed on water as Aragon’s principal wealth, on feelings of exploitation and on the problem of emigration.⁴⁶ Whilst there was an *españolista* tone in the opening it argued that Aragon continued to feel exploited with regard to its goods, services and resources, that water is Aragon’s principal resource and that it should be used there or people will be forced to emigrate to where it is used. Its use of a ‘riverine’ analogy arguing that the Aragonese should form, ‘a single river so that the collective life of Aragon does not escape’ is highly evocative of the water-emigration issues.⁴⁷

Aragon’s ‘problems’ at the end of the Franco era were a major stimulus in the emergence of *aragonesista* groups and political parties PAR and a major concern for those who wrote in *Alcorze*. At the time of the PAR’s inception these ‘problems’ were predominantly water related and included the proposed transfer of water from the Ebro, nuclear power stations in Aragonese territory, exploitation of hydraulic and energy resources, emigration, perceived victimisation and lack of respect demonstrated by failure to consult with Aragon over the proposed water transfer. Also, the fact that Aragon would have to follow the ‘slow route’ to autonomy, as set out in Article 143, resulted in a growing view that it could be governed more effectively locally. Aragon did not go for the referendum necessary to follow the

capital of Aragon. Interviews with Hipólito Gómez de las Rocas, 24 October 2006, Zaragoza and Guillermo Fátas.

⁴⁴ ‘Autonomías regionales y unidad de España’, *Alcorze*, November 1979, p. 14.

⁴⁵ ‘Manifiesto del Partido Aragonés Regionalista, San Jorge 1988, Día de Aragón’, *Alcorze*, No. 82, March-April 1988, p. 5.

⁴⁶ ‘Manifiesto del Partido Aragonés Regionalista’, *Alcorze*, No. 65, May 1985, pp. 8-9.

⁴⁷ ‘Manifiesto del Partido Aragonés Regionalista’, *Alcorze*, No. 65, May 1985, pp. 8-9.

‘fast route’ under Article 151 due to the fact that the ruling centrist party, UCD blocked its access to this route following the decision by its National Executive Committee that all autonomies except Catalonia and the Basque Country should follow the process set out in Article 143. This was a blow for leaders of the UCD in Aragon, in particular Juan Antonio Bolea, President of the pre-autonomous government who had previously declared in favour of access by Article 151 for Aragon. The pact (*pacto autonómico*) between the national executives of the two major state parties in the summer of 1981 to block any attempts by other regions to follow Catalonia, the Basque Country, Galicia and Andalusia down the ‘fast route’ to autonomy also caused a crisis in the PSOE in Aragon. This situation allowed the PAR to establish itself in defence of *aragonésismo*. To highlight the PAR’s support for full autonomy for Aragon Gómez de las Rocas abstained from the voting on Aragon’s Statute in the Spanish Congress.

Thirdly, water is viewed in terms of regional development and a sense of grievance that it should not first be used to benefit the region where it is located. The idea that Aragon’s natural resources should first benefit the Aragonese is paramount in *Alcorze* in the late 1970s and 1980s following the period of dictatorship when water policy had been directed at state-wide interests without consideration for regional interests. In the December 1979 edition reference is made to the need for Aragon’s Statute of Autonomy to guarantee that the natural wealth of the territory such as water should be used there.⁴⁸ The idea that natural wealth should first benefit the region in which it is located was a predominant theme of this period and was not limited to Aragon but also prevalent in Castile.⁴⁹ Under Franco a form of state-based resource regulation with the ultimate aim of ensuring cheap water availability for Spanish national economic growth and the hydro-electric needs of the industrialised areas of Spain, such as Catalonia and the Basque Country had paid no heed to regional considerations. As the dictatorship drew to a close the view of water as a regional resource, which had begun to develop in the late 1920s and early 1930s, reemerged and gained ground throughout the 1970s and 1980s. This included a view

⁴⁸ ‘Ponencia sobre autonomía: conclusiones’, *Alcorze*, December 1979, p. 7.

⁴⁹ Similarly, in Castile it was felt that hydroelectricity production using the waters of the Duero had contributed to the Spanish nation’s industrialisation whilst that of the region had lagged behind. See Jesús García Fernández, *Desarrollo y autonomía en Castilla*, (Barcelona: Ariel, 1981), p. 185 and Valentín Cabero, *El espacio geográfico castellano-leonés* (Valladolid: Ambito, 1982), pp. 114-16.

of it as a regional resource that should in the first instance benefit its own community's development and industrialisation.⁵⁰ In Aragon, the transfer of energy was seen as one more transfer of resources from the region, the others being the transfer of people (emigration) and the proposed transfer of water to Barcelona.⁵¹

In the 1970s, there was a growing feeling of grievance and injustice at not having the means to improve things in Aragon when proposals were afoot to transfer water to Barcelona. Gómez de las Rocas pointed out that when he was President of the Diputación Provincial, in 1975-1976, there were six villages in the Monegros area that did not have drinking water, Leciñena, Farlete, Perdiguera, Monegrillo, La Almolda y Bujaraloz. The people only had ponds which they shared with the animals. He decided that something had to be done and provided them with drinking water, not water for irrigation as this was outside his power and investment facilities. This he argued is what the Aragonese carry inside, 'grievance at not having the means to be able to improve things here.'⁵² A further grievance highlighted in *Alcorze* was lack of state investment in the hydraulic infrastructure necessary for Aragon to make use of the water it had with the PAR arguing that it did not have an excess of water but lack of investment 'it is regrettable that water should continue to be lost to the sea instead of using it in the river basin, in places like Monegros or the left bank (of the Ebro)'.⁵³

In the 1990s, with its move from regionalism, reference shifted from water as a source of regional development to a view of it as a means of future economic development and as a unifying element. In the PAR's 'vision' of Aragon's future water is required for pending irrigated schemes, and to ensure future industrialisation and water supply.⁵⁴ The pending irrigation schemes refers to those approved in the Riegos de Altoaragón Plan (1915) but still outstanding due to the absence of state funding. Future industrialisation is by nature unspecific. In *Razones y retos*, the PAR's aspirations are expanded but still unspecific:

⁵⁰ Blanco, p. 16.

⁵¹ Royo-Villanova, p. 191.

⁵² Interview with Hipólito Gómez de las Rocas.

⁵³ 'Hipólito defendió el agua de Aragón ante Pujol y Lerma', *Alcorze*, No. 93, June-July 1989, p. 20.

⁵⁴ 'Especial Elecciones – Nuestros compromisos con Aragón', *Alcorze*, No. 95 October 1989, p. 1.

Water allows industries to be attracted and employment created, it modernises agriculture with irrigation and adds value to our products, it opens up opportunities for tourism and other services, in short it generates wellbeing and wealth. And it is only just that all of this should be carried out where the resource is located, in Aragon, and that no one should see as lack of solidarity what is only being justly claimed and meanness rather than survival.⁵⁵

In terms of opportunity costs exploitation of Aragon's raw materials is seen to limit opportunities for attracting firms and creating wealth and water is seen as an opportunity for territorial rebalance, reference to Aragon's uneven development and uneven population distribution as a result of depopulation.⁵⁶ A further opportunity cost was considered to be that of limiting the opportunities of future generations if water was committed to transfer.⁵⁷

In the 1990s, in *Alcorze* and other party documents there is a perception of water as a unifying element. It is argued that the use of Aragon's water, especially from the rivers over which it has sole competence, 'ought to unite the Aragonese because it dictates the scale of our development and future'.⁵⁸ This idea is also present in *Un proyecto para los 90. Por el progreso y la identidad de Aragón* (A Project for the 90s. Progress and Aragonese Identity) written at the beginning of the Eiroa presidency where the PAR set out its moderate nationalist project for the decade. Here the PAR argues water should unite the Aragonese because it is the means for their agricultural and industrial future, reiterating the argument that Aragon does not have a surplus of water, but lacks investments.⁵⁹

Fourthly, water is perceived as a source of life and as the essence of the territory and its people. Throughout its existence the PAR has viewed water, and sometimes more specifically the Ebro, as a source of life and the element around which the historic will of the people has been formulated.⁶⁰ References to the life aspect are not as abundant in *Alcorze* as in Gómez de las Rocas *La autonomía a la vista*, in interviews with PAR political figures and more recently in chapters and forewords written by its

⁵⁵ Eiroa, *Razones y retos*, p. 168-69.

⁵⁶ Eiroa, *Razones y retos*, p. 40.

⁵⁷ Eiroa, *Razones y retos*, p. 45.

⁵⁸ 'Por el empleo y la política social', *Alcorze*, No. 106, April 1991, p. 7.

⁵⁹ *Un proyecto para los 90*, p. 107.

⁶⁰ 'Informe sobre los riegos de Aragón', *Alcorze*, No. 75, p. 6.

Environment Minister and Director of the Instituto Aragonés del Agua for water related publications.⁶¹ Water as life has a triple connotation: as physical life, as the essence of Aragon and an element around which the historic will of the people has been formulated and as economic life. Water as the essence of Aragon reflects a sense of identity that is contingent in nature. In a report on irrigation in Aragon in *Alcorze* the history, character, personality and future expectations of those who have inhabited Aragon are seen to depend on the use of the water that runs through the territory.⁶²

Fifthly, in the 1990 the Ebro is seen as one of the ‘symbolic spaces’ of Aragon’s identity. In the period when the PAR took a moderate nationalist stance, in particular during the years of Eiroa’s Presidency when it attempted to develop a nationalist project for Aragon, one of the principle objectives of which was the reconstruction of Aragonese identity, the Ebro was accorded a more symbolic aspect amongst a number of other identity traits:

One of these identity traits is our languages, those that are spoken specifically in our territory. Looked down on for a long time, these languages identify as Aragonese those who speak them, the same is true of our law and history, the *jota*, the Ebro or Pyrenees as symbolic spaces and nobility of character and universalistic spirit.⁶³

The Ebro and the Pyrenees are also listed as identity traits in *Un proyecto para los 90*, conceding that although they are not the exclusive property of the Aragonese they shape their sense of being and feeling.⁶⁴ However, outside this period references to the symbolism of natural features of the territory are rare.

Finally, there is ambiguity as to whether water is a resource or natural heritage. In the early days it was seen primarily as an economic resource. In the 1990s, in the period of the shift to nationalism, a view of water as Aragon’s natural heritage emerges.

⁶¹ See Hipólito Gómez de las Rocas, ‘*La autonomía a la vista*’; Alfredo Boné, ‘Foreword’, *Funciones y usos del agua en la Cuenca del Ebro* by Javier del Valle Melendro (Zaragoza: Prames, D. L., 2003), p. 4 and interviews with Hipólito Gómez de las Rocas, Alfredo Boné, 20 February 2007, Zaragoza and Emilio Eiroa.

⁶² ‘Informe sobre los riegos de Aragón’, *Alcorze*, No. 75, October 1986, pp. 6-7, p. 6.

⁶³ Emilio Eiroa García, ‘Sobre las lenguas de Aragón’, *Alcorze*, No. 103 October-November 1990, pp. 3-4.

⁶⁴ *Un proyecto para los 90*, p. 55.

However, in the early part of the next decade, from 2000-2003, the water of the Ebro is again referred to as Aragon's principal resource as opposed to natural heritage, which carries with it an economic connotation. More recently, however, as the interviews carried out show, the PAR appears to have moved away from the view of water and the Ebro as a resource, preferring to see it as a 'vital principle', arguing that to refer to it as a resource gives it a monetary value which it wishes to avoid, the emphasis passing firmly to its 'essential' quality. A shift towards water being perceived as more than a mere natural resource and in a more essential way has its origins in 2001:

For Aragon and its peoples, water is more than a mere natural resource; it is a sentiment that is transmitted across generations. Man's struggle to transform and make fertile dry and barren lands, making use of these water flows, which pass on their way to the Mediterranean, has been an aim which has still not been fulfilled.⁶⁵

The idea that water is more than a resource is developed by Alfredo Boné and Alfredo Cajal.⁶⁶ Water as a sentiment transmitted across generations has an intergenerational connotation which Deudney argues is frequently associated with national identity and community, although usually in environmental nationalism.⁶⁷ In the 1990s, in the period of the PAR's adoption of nationalism, a more ecological view of resources is expressed in its electoral programmes. In *Un proyecto para los 90*, it states that its *aragonesismo* incorporates concern for 'our' resources and ecology. It argues that 'the environment is the world that we have received and must pass on in a better state to future generations.'⁶⁸ Again this introduces the idea of intergenerational community and environmental stewardship often associated with nationalism. In Programa de Gobierno, Nosotros Sí lo haremos 1995-1999, in its model for sustainable development, it sets out the intention to defend Aragon's natural resources in the face of any threat to despoil or exploit them. The adoption of these concepts corresponds with the shift to nationalism when the PAR took on a growing number of nationalist tenets and terminology, namely ecological concerns,

⁶⁵ 'El trasvase del Ebro amenaza el futuro de Aragón', *Alcorze*, April 2001, p. 5.

⁶⁶ Interview with Alfredo Boné and Alfredo Cajal, 20 February 2007, Zaragoza.

⁶⁷ See Deudney, p. 130-31 who associates the intergenerational idea with *earth nationalism* and environmentalism. This intergenerational view is also taken up by the ex-President of the CHA, Azucena Lozano in an environmental context in Chapter 7.

⁶⁸ *Un proyecto para los 90*, p. 24.

sustainable development, identity and natural heritage in addition to its more usual economic view of water and the Ebro. This shift could be ascribed firstly, to political opportunism as described by Lopez-Laborda et al., secondly, to competition with the nationalist party CHA which was gaining force in the 1990s and thirdly, to the PAR's adoption of nationalism and its quest for Aragon's recognition as a 'historic nationality' in its revised Statute of Autonomy and its use of a more nationalist language.

Agua y autonomía are consistently the central themes of the PAR's Día de San Jorge Manifestoes. These include water as Aragon's principal natural resource, exploitation, outstanding hydraulic and communication infrastructures, water transfer, increased autonomy and equity with other territories. In the manifestoes, prepared for an occasion of considerable nation-building significance, water is viewed as Aragon's principal natural resource that should be in the first instance used to benefit it. Whilst the manifestoes of the early 1980s open in a very *españolista* tone the message in relation to natural resources, of which water is the most important, is that Aragon feels exploited, that it is faced with many problems which need to be resolved and that water is viewed as a constant worry.

The 1986 Manifesto draws attention to the fact that Aragon is in a poor state, reference to its problems of depopulation, the threat of water transfer and its lack of hydraulic and communications infrastructures. Natural resources are viewed as a means to 'construct Aragon' and overcome its 'problems'. In this instance emphasis is placed on the use of the waters of rivers exclusive to Aragon, the Gallego, Jiloca, Guadalope and Matarraña, as opposed to the Ebro.⁶⁹ In 1988, the focus falls on water as a 'constant worry' in the face of transfer proposals, the use of which assures future agricultural and industrial development. This is followed by the assertion that the natural resources of Aragon should first of all benefit the Aragonese. Reference is also made to 'exploitation of this land' by the central power.⁷⁰ The theme of exploitation once again appears in the 1997 Manifesto in relation to Aragonese historical heritage, identity, self-government, natural resources and social force. In addition to natural resources this refers to historical documents moved to other parts

⁶⁹ 1986 Manifiesto del Partido Aragonés Regionalista, Aragón es nuestro Partido.

⁷⁰ 1988 Manifiesto del PAR Aragón es nuestro partido.

of Spain by the Franco regime and to the appropriation of symbols of its identity such the Ebro, the Virgin of Pilar and the *jota*. In the 1990s, the manifestoes focus on the dual goals of full autonomy and the defence of Aragonese interests such as water. In the period from 1999 the question of water transfer looms in the face of the PP's Ebro transfer proposal in its PHN 2000. In 1999, the PAR expresses disillusionment with its coalition with the PP arguing that Aragonese society had given power to state parties who had not fulfilled expectations and promises and queries why institutions should be put in hands of those whose interests lie outside. It sets out its election proposals which included giving Aragon the communication, hydraulic and industrial infrastructures that have been outstanding for decades, opposing measures that would facilitate transfers from the Ebro and making use of Aragon's natural, human, physical and economic resources to produce the development that they require.⁷¹ Opposition to the proposed transfer of water from the Ebro dominates the manifestoes of the early part of the 2000s. In 2001 reference is made to attempts from outside their community 'to take steps to use our natural resources to generate wealth in more developed territories forgetting the historic grievances of our people... Our future and our resources are being negotiated with parties from other communities'.⁷² In the light of the transfer proposals the PAR takes the opportunity to emphasise that what makes it different from state-based parties is that it does not have to follow and obey outside interests.⁷³ Following the shelving of the transfer proposal following the defeat of the PP in the 2004 General Election the focus of the manifestoes once again falls on increased autonomy and equity with other territories. However, there is reference to opposing claims to rights to water from the Ebro from communities outside the river basin included in their new Statutes of Autonomy, clearly a reference to Catalonia and Valencia.⁷⁴ In the 2008 Manifesto, despite stating that Aragon's natural resources and possibilities for development are protected in its new Statute of Autonomy approved in 2007, the PAR point out that it is still necessary in the light of 'new and old voices of transfer' to reaffirm that they will oppose any transfer of water from the Ebro.⁷⁵ Finally, in 2009 the PAR points

⁷¹ 1999 Manifiesto San Jorge 99.

⁷² 2001 Manifiesto del Partido Aragonés, Día de San Jorge.

⁷³ 2001 Manifiesto del Partido Aragonés, Día de San Jorge.

⁷⁴ 2006 Manifiesto Aspiramos a más. A más autonomía, a más progreso para los aragoneses, for instance, claims in the new statutes being prepared by Catalonia and Valencia to water from the Ebro.

⁷⁵ 2008 Manifiesto 23 de Abril 2008.

out that the challenges ahead still remain hydraulic and communication infrastructures; a reference to the continued quest for state funding for the pending irrigation projects approved in the Pacto del Agua and Riegos de Altoaragón Plan and plans for improved road communications.

How the Ebro is viewed in the interviews carried out

In interviews a view of the Ebro as life and as a ‘vital principle’ is more predominant than in *Alcorze* and PAR manifestoes. Leading figures of the party, past and present, see the Ebro as ‘the natural energy of Aragon’ and as a ‘vital principle’ or ‘vital element’. Whilst viewed as the ‘natural energy of Aragon’ the PAR’s vision of the Ebro and water does not carry the same ecological connotations as that of the CHA. The PAR argue that it is no good having water if you do not have jobs, you have to use it, you have to build more reservoirs and in spite of the ecology lobby, you have to store water to facilitate agricultural and industrial development. Alfredo Cajal, member of the PAR’s Executive Council, argued that ‘if we want our territory to be a territory that is alive and a territory that has possibilities we have to use the water that we have in the best form possible with the least possible damage to the environment’.⁷⁶

According to Gómez de las Rocas, in the 1970s and 1980s the PAR regarded the Ebro as the ‘natural energy of Aragon’ and as essential to its future: if it lost the use of water it would lose an important part of its future.⁷⁷ It was regarded as vital for the extension of irrigated agricultural land and future industrialisation as well as for socio-economic development. The PAR considered it necessary to cover Aragon’s needs before considering any transfer. This included irrigation of the right bank of the Ebro and part of the left for irrigated agriculture. It regarded it an injustice to enrich other areas when Aragon itself required this form of development. Gómez de las Rocas questioned the transfer of water to other areas, such as Barcelona then plus Valencia and Murcia now, when there is so much land on the banks of the Ebro in need of irrigation. Currently Aragon has 411.900 hectares of irrigated agricultural land and a further 404,630 are deemed suitable for irrigation. However, the state-

⁷⁶ Interview with Alfredo Cajal, 20 February 2007, Zaragoza.

⁷⁷ Interview with Hipólito Gómez de las Rocas.

funded public works referred to earlier are needed to achieve this. Gómez de las Roces argued that developing the Ebro basin was indispensable, the Constitution itself stating that there should be socio-economic balance at a territorial level. He argued that you can not have wealthy, almost post-industrial societies like Barcelona and Valencia, and another without the financial resources i.e. state-funding to develop the irrigation and communications infrastructures necessary to transform its economy. Definition of Aragon as industrial or post-industrial is problematic. As a whole it follows the main tendencies of the more advanced Spanish communities, however, the practical effects of its depopulation problem makes it possible to speak of post-industrial society only in the context of Zaragoza and its metropolitan area. He considered it absurd that an enormous area like Monegros should be without a single city with more than 5000 inhabitants. Monegros affords a prime example of Aragon's problems of demographic imbalance, depopulation and low population density associated with non-irrigated land. The population density of Monegros is only 7.6 inhabitants per km² with only 7 of the 31 municipalities having a population of over 1,000.⁷⁸

All of the PAR figures interviewed viewed the Ebro as life and future. Eiroa pointed out that when the PAR was set up it had a rural base and 'the theme of water was one which raised a great deal of feeling as it was a way of life, a system of life and everyone regarded it as life'.⁷⁹ The significance of the Ebro for the PAR was therefore seen as life and future, to take away water would be to take away life.⁸⁰ Boné and Cajal do not appear to see the Ebro or water as a symbol of life but as life itself. As always there is a shift between the use of the terms Ebro and water as if they were interchangeable. Boné highlighted the importance of water in Aragon's past pointing out that its first written document is a bronze from 78 A.D. attesting to a conflict between two villages over water, Aragon having a long history of water conflicts. Cajal highlighted the fact that throughout history the Aragonese have been engaged in attempts to regulate water and develop irrigated agriculture pointing out that at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries they had obtained promises of investment from state administrations to carry out the necessary

⁷⁸ Gran Enciclopedia Aragonesa, http://www.enciclopedia-aragonesa.com/voz.asp?voz_id=8943 [accessed 6/6/10].

⁷⁹ Interview with Emilio Eiroa.

⁸⁰ Interviews with Alfredo Boné and Alfredo Cajal.

infrastructure works. However, progress has been precarious with years in which there were advances in relation to regulation works but there still remained much to be done. Consequently, unfulfilled promises that there would be more irrigated land than there currently is have created a sense of grievance.

In Boné and Cajal's responses to the question of what the Ebro means to the PAR they set out what it means for Aragon rather than specifically for the PAR, although this is implicitly the same thing.⁸¹ In addition, like Eiroa both switch to the use of the term water. When asked whether it is the river or water that is most important, Boné replied that it was both and that in recent years the conceptual aspect of rivers had been evolving, that they used to be thought of simply as a conductor of water, however, it is now recognised that the river has an important social component. The Ebro, he argued, is a river that has been, and is the life of the Aragonese and has two important connotations: as an essential element and as a social space, or meeting place. Cajal added that the Ebro has provided the backbone of the whole Aragonese territory and Aragon has constructed its structures and its organisation around the Ebro. Therefore, the river has a value that goes beyond the conduction of water; it is social space and has the value of organisation of a territory, which is the reason why the most important city in Aragon is on the Ebro.

Gómez de las Rocas is of the opinion that the way in which the Ebro is viewed by today's PAR has not changed from how it was viewed in the 1970s and 1980s. However, interviews and document analysis revealed some subtle changes in recent years. Members of the party's current executive, Boné and Cajal, do not identify it as a resource, arguing that this gives it a price and they do not believe that water has a price. This represents a shift from previous policy. Cajal argued that to speak of water as a mere resource limits it too much. It cannot be compared with coal or petroleum; it is a 'vital principle' without which life would not be possible for the Aragonese. He maintained that if we identify it as a resource, indirectly we are giving it a price and he does not believe that water has a price. He acknowledged that the fact that this 'vital element' brings with it economic developments confuses one aspect with another i.e. the vital element and the resource. It is likely that this change

⁸¹ This was not the true of interviews with leaders of the CHA and who saw it as having a different significance in the popular imagination to that of their party.

is a political move to avoid classification of water as a commodity that can be bought or sold: financial compensation would not recompense for loss of future use of water committed to transfer.

The notion that water is more than an element of production but a fundamental natural and social asset has been studied by academics such as Frederico Aguilera Klink who argues that it has a social and emotional importance which gives it a communal and social value that goes beyond its value as an element of production.⁸² He points to studies of agricultural communities in Spain and Europe which conclude that for agriculturalists water is a special element, which should not be solely the object of market forces given its symbolic and emotional importance.⁸³ A similar line is taken by Boné and Cajal and the PAR in their classification of water as a 'vital principle'.

The reasons for the PAR's opposition to the transfer of water from the Ebro proposed in the PHN 2000 are given as twofold.⁸⁴ Firstly, the Ebro does not have the water necessary for the transfer of 1050 hm³ proposed without further regulation and storage infrastructures as it suffers shortages at certain times of the year. Secondly, if these 1050 hm³ remain in Aragon the Aragonese would be able to see the promises of increased irrigated land made in 1915 fulfilled. Similarly, Bolea used the argument that the transfer of 1,400 hm³ per year proposed in the 1974 Ebro-Pirineo Oriental transfer would irrigate 175,000 hectares of land in the Ebro basin: both arguments being true only if state-funding was forthcoming for the necessary infrastructures.⁸⁵ For Cajal these outstanding works, raise the question of whether it is right that some citizens who have available water and promises made to them almost 100 years ago, should not see these fulfilled, as a result of this water being transferred to others outside the river basin. He pointed out that the PAR had been part of this struggle from its inception and was founded precisely to defend water, not only that of the Ebro but all sources. In this sense it had almost been the life motive of the party, 'the life of Aragon is so much related to water. It's an

⁸² Frederico Aguilera Klink, 'El agua como activo social', in *El agua. Mitos, ritos y realidades*, ed. by José A. González Alcantud and Antonio Malpica Cuello (Granada: Diputación Provincial de Granada, 1995), pp. 359, 368.

⁸³ Aguilera Klink, p. 368.

⁸⁴ Interview with Alfredo Cajal.

⁸⁵ Bolea, *Los riegos*, p. 508.

interrelation that is so tight, so intimate that one can not understand a prosperous Aragon without water. For us it is more than a symbol.⁸⁶

The Ebro is regarded by a number of other interviewees, particularly those of the CHA and the left as a ‘symbol’ of the PAR and in general symbols such as the Ebro, el Pilar and the *jota* have been associated more with the conservative *aragonesismo* of the centre-right PAR than with that of the left and the CHA.⁸⁷ However, the Ebro has never been officially taken up as a symbol of the PAR, its symbol being Aragon and the colours of the ancient House of Aragon which it uses superimposed on an outline of Aragon as its logo. It acknowledges that in the post-Franco period, it took the Ebro as its ‘flag’, Eiroa pointing out that the Ebro as the ‘flag’ of the PAR is a simile, ‘one of the basic ideas that the PAR has defended is the Ebro, the Ebro and water. The Ebro is an image of water, which is to say, that as a ‘flag’ the Ebro is an ideal of the defence of water.’

In the light of this and Gómez de las Rocas’ view that the Ebro is ‘everything’ for Aragon, the possibility of socio-economic transformation and territorial planning and a symbol of Aragonese identity, ‘one of our mental fixations that goes together with the religious and populist symbol, the Virgin of Pilar’, it is to some degree paradoxical that the PAR, which also claims that the ‘land and our people are our ideology’, does not specifically promulgate a symbol, the Ebro, which is seen by all of those interviewed as an important part of the ‘popular imagination’ as a symbol of its party. Ironically, in the interviews I carried out, the party which claimed that it shared the same symbols as the Aragonese people was a state party, the PP.⁸⁸

How the PAR is perceived to view the Ebro by others interviewed

The perception of many of those interviewed is that the PAR sees the Ebro solely in economic terms, in an agrarian, rural or antiquated manner, as a ‘flag’ and as their only ideology. According to Vicente de Vera, ‘it was an agrarian party and its view of the Ebro was shaped by this and irrigation. Few things moved it more than water

⁸⁶ Interview with Alfredo Cajal.

⁸⁷ Enrique Guillén Pardos, *Aragón, comunidad imaginada*, p. 103.

⁸⁸ Interview with Gustavo Alcalde.

and from then on one could say that it is a symbol of Aragon. Although there are more important things the Ebro is the key point of its ideology'.⁸⁹ In Lozano's view, the PAR's defence of the Ebro is an economic defence of a product, of a basic element, 'it has to be used in the best way economically and for this it requires more reservoirs, more utilization, use what you have to the maximum. The river doesn't matter to the PAR, only its use'.⁹⁰ In Fuster's opinion, the PAR sees the Ebro in a 'traditional, antiquated sense, in the sense of value, of the river that feeds us, the river that gives us flows to irrigate and produce crops. It has an agrarian perspective and a vision of the irrigator, of the beneficiary and it doesn't have the perspective of the river as a value in itself, as an environmental value. In fact with these positions they are always in opposite positions to us'.⁹¹ Finally, the idea that the Ebro is the patrimony of the PAR, as opposed to the *aragonesista* left is a viewpoint expressed by a number of those interviewed of left-wing orientation, which as we will see in the next chapter is one of the reasons why the CHA did not take it up in a more symbolic way.⁹²

Conclusion

The Ebro is viewed by the PAR as life, hope and economic development. In its economic vision water and the Ebro are seen as vital for increasing irrigated agricultural land and diversifying agricultural cultivation, attracting industries, developing tourism, generating services, stabilising population and addressing demographic imbalance in Aragon. Its views are conditioned primarily by its essence as a territorial party and its fundamental ethos of defending Aragonese interests in response to outside threats in the form of water transfers proposed in central government PHNs. Whilst defence of water and opposition to proposed transfers form part of its essence as a party set up to defend Aragon's territorial and economic interests its perception of the Ebro also reflects the situation at a given moment. For instance, in the early phase it reflected and responded to the problems faced by Aragon as it emerged from the period of the Franco dictatorship. Water was seen as a key element of Aragon's problems of emigration, rural exodus, territorial and

⁸⁹ Interview with Eduardo Vicente de Vera.

⁹⁰ Interview with Azucena Lozano.

⁹¹ Interview with Bizén Fuster.

⁹² For instance interviews with Gonzalo Borrás, Eduardo Vicente de Vera, Chesús Bernal.

demographic imbalance and economic development which, it argued, would be further exacerbated if water was transferred to Barcelona before first attending to Aragon's needs. Throughout its existence the PAR has responded to proposed water transfers. Thus, opposition to water transfer became a central part of a defensive *aragonesismo*. However, grievance and mobilisation in defence of the Ebro and water have served to enhance a sense of Aragonese consciousness and identity with the PAR evolving at the pace of the grievances suffered by Aragon. In addition, the PAR's defence of water has been intimately associated with its quest for increased autonomy: water and autonomy being central to its campaign slogans and manifestoes. As a result of its essence as a party set up primarily to defend Aragon's territorial and economic interests rather than an ethno-regionalist or cultural nationalist party, for the most part, the PAR has not developed the kind of ethno-symbolic, iconographic or identitory view of the Ebro or elements Aragon's landscape referred to by the theorists of nationalism. The Ebro has been seen largely in terms of economic development, grievance, regional inequality with only brief incursions into symbolic, identity and essential aspects. Exceptions are the period of its swing to nationalism and the Eiroa presidency and recent years, particularly, in the run-up to the Expo 2008 when there was an attempt to harness the more symbolic aspects of the Ebro.

CHAPTER 7 USE OF THE EBRO BY PRESENT DAY ARAGONESISTA AND NATIONALIST PARTIES: CHA

*‘The water debate has been our ‘battle horse’
and distinguishes us from the other parties’.*¹

Denomination

As with the PAR, if we accept a party’s own nomenclature and policy statements as an indication of its regionalist or nationalist orientations, the CHA falls into the category of nationalist, describing itself as ‘nationalist, left-wing and progressive’.² The main pillars of its ideology are set out as *aragonesismo*, federalism, socialism and environmentalism and it has strong ‘Europeanism’ tenets. However, the degree of importance placed on each of these elements is crucial as it will be argued that this along with the influence of intellectuals and associated networks plays a vital role in determining the hierarchical position of the Ebro and whether or not it is viewed in a particularly nationalistic way. Moreover, as the thesis will demonstrate, the Ebro appears in many different manifestations apart from the more obvious symbolic and iconographic. It is interwoven with a wide range of nationalistic themes such as respect and dignity, problems and grievances, strength and cohesion, identity and nation building, self-management of resources and preservation and protection of Aragon’s natural environment, the latter running counter to the *aragonesista* ‘economic development’ vision considered in the previous chapter. As a result of its fairly radical ecological and environmental vision and views on hydraulic development focused primarily in sustainability the CHA is opposed to irrigated agriculture schemes that incur high socio-environmental costs such as the construction or reconstruction of the reservoirs of Biscarrues, Yesa and Santaliesta. It argues that not only would they facilitate proposed water transfers but would also increase socio-economic problems such as depopulation in Aragon’s mountain area. These views run counter to the ‘economic development vision’ supported by the PAR and other political parties in Aragon, prior to 2004, with the exception of the IU, which are based on increased regulation of water resources and the extension of

¹ Interview with Javier Mur, *Aragón Libre*, No. 53, 2004, p. 7.

² ‘Quienes somos’, <http://www/chunta/com/pagl-l/htm> [accessed 19/11/00].

irrigated agriculture. Since 2004, the PSOE has moved to a more environmental stance and now favours savings through modernisation of existing irrigation systems as opposed to increased irrigation.

Origins

The resurgence of the *aragonesista* nationalist left, in the form of the CHA, which officially came into being on 29 June 1986, brought with it the promise of a distinctly nationalist perspective in both the water debate and politics more widely, however, as we will see the nationalist aspect of the CHA has frequently been overshadowed by its focus on socialist and ecological tenets. From its inception considerable efforts were made by historians of REA to link it with the most coherent of the early *aragonesista*/nationalist organisations, the Unión Aragonesista of Barcelona, from which it took its name Unión Aragonesista-Chunta Aragonesista. They also resurrected the emblematic name of the earlier group's magazine *El Ebro* for a journal produced by the Fundación Gaspar Torrente, which has close links to the CHA, reproduced texts written by the leading figures of early nationalism and published historical monographs and numerous articles on historical *aragonesismo*. This link with the earlier group was reinforced in the first edition of the magazine *Aragón Libre* and in the inaugural speech in the Senate of CHA deputy, José Antonio Labordeta:

Unión Aragonesista was not born out of nothing: it drank fundamentally from the *aragonesista* and progressive essences of the 1920 and 1930s, propounded by figures such as Gaspar Torrente or Julio Calvo Alfaro, taking into account, however, that many things have occurred in our contemporary history since then.³

It is the culmination of a long process of Aragonese nationalism which emerged in the early years of the 1920s with figures like Gaspar Torrente and resulted in the foundation of organisations such as the Unión Aragonesista or Estado Aragonés.⁴

More immediate links have also been made with the defunct Partido Socialista Aragonés (PSA) and the formations created by progressive intellectuals in the

³ '¿Por qué Unión Aragonesista?' *Aragón Libre*, No. 1, p. 3.

⁴ 'Labordeta debate con Aznar', *Aragón Libre*, No 37, June 2000, p. 4.

Transition period. José Ramón Marcuello links it directly to the PSA, ‘the father, in its time and to a certain extent not refuted by the CHA’.⁵ Jesús Sebastián Lorente sees it as a combination of the two:

The CHA... was born as the heir of the extinct PSA, the *Andalán* collective and the ideological bridge – coinciding with a period of fall in nationalist temperature – held by the ‘Rolde de Estudios Nacionalistas Aragonés’ (now REA, which was characterised by political relationships and personal links).⁶

Its first president, several of the founders, ‘gurus’, spiritual advisers and mentors were closely involved with the PSA, *Andalán* or RENA, the latter bringing with them perceptions of the Ebro described in Chapter 6. However, the CHA also had its own unique origins in cultural associations, groups concerned with defending Aragonese territory against projects which threatened it and in alternative movements such as ecologism, feminism, conscientious objection to compulsory military service and international solidarity.⁷ Its associations with defence of territory movements, which were largely a response to the water policy of the Franco regime and its forced appropriation of land for reservoirs in the Pyrenean valleys and its lack of consideration for socio-ecological aspects paved the way for the CHA’s position on water and the Ebro.

The CHA also had very middle class, ‘civil society’ origins and as its second President, Azucena Lozano points out, ‘it was not born in the style of a classic party but as a consequence of the concerns of a group of young people who worked in various cultural, educational and social fields who had an *aragonesista* spirit and felt that it was necessary to articulate themselves politically.’ She conceded that ‘perhaps it would not have been born if the PSA had not disappeared, although logically it should have evolved in accordance with social inertia’.⁸ Lozano argues that as no other political formation was interested in the principles set out above and CHA put

⁵ José Ramón Marcuello, ‘Frutas de un tiempo distinto’, *Trébede*, No. 67, p. 12.

⁶ Jesús Sebastián Lorente, ‘La bicefalia aragonesista’, *Siete de Aragón*, No. 66, 16-22 June 1995, p. 10.

⁷ With regard to support given to leadership of CHA by veterans of earlier formations as mentors see Eloy Fernández Clemente’s column *Diario de un pesimista activo* in *Siete de Aragón*, No. 85, 3-9 November 1995, p. 11 and No. 102, 1-7 March 1996, p. 11.

⁸ Fernando Foncillas, ‘Azucena Lozano, Presidenta de Chunta Aragonesista’, *Siete de Aragón*, 13-19 January 1995, pp. 8-9, p. 8.

itself forward to fill this vacuum as a socialist and nationalist political group. Its members had an average age of 25 and, unlike the founders of the PAR, had little or no previous political experience, which hampered entry into the Aragonese Parliament. Support for the CHA was propelled by a growing feeling that Aragon was discriminated against, a factor which also coloured its views on the Ebro and water.⁹

However, its third President, Bizén Fuster did not consider the CHA a direct heir of the PSA:

The founding group that came together in 1986, which coincided with the referendum on NATO, believed that Aragon needed representation and we took up the challenge. We were members of citizen and cultural associations, and associations that defended Aragon against projects that threatened it and continue to threaten it. There were also people from the PSA, the most able who saw how to link us with the project that they had left unfinished. However, it was a continuity that was more testimonial than real.¹⁰

In party literature, however, and for factions within the party and its associated foundations it is the historical link with the first Unión Aragonesista, from which Bernal points out the CHA, ‘recovered the name and the cause’, which is of prime importance in its origins.¹¹ Significantly, this link with the earlier *aragonesista* group plays an important part in determining the symbols of the CHA, namely Gaspar Torrente and the significance placed on the first *El Ebro* magazine as a repository of early theorisation. The final sentence of the statement of origins in the first edition of *Aragón Libre* pointing out that times have changed in the interim period is significant as this argumentation is used by the CHA leadership to explain divergences in thinking between it and the earlier Union Aragonesista on issues such as water policy

⁹ In response to a question on whether there was a true sense of Aragonese consciousness at that time Lozano maintained that, whilst not as strong as in Catalonia or the Basque Country, many people were beginning to see that Aragon was discriminated against. Foncillas, ‘Azucena Lozano’, p. 8.

¹⁰ Bizén Fuster, ‘Somos el aldabonazo de Madrid’, *Siete de Aragón*, No. 50, 24 February – 2 March 1995, p. 28.

¹¹ Chesús Bernal, ‘Regeneración, ahora más que nunca’, *Siete de Aragón*, 17-23 February 1995, p. 28.

based on increased irrigation and a more Romantic view of the Ebro as a father-figure and life-giver.¹²

Thus, the CHA's 'civil society' tenets and association with ecological and defence of territory movements, together with the multifaceted aspects of its origins drawing on links with figures of historical Aragonese nationalism and the influences of the 1970s and 1980s *aragonesista* formations and intellectuals play an important part in shaping its views on the Ebro and water and contrast sharply with the more agrarian views of the PAR and the fact that its leaders were drawn from the political establishment.

After a slow start, the CHA made rapid electoral progress between the mid-1990s and 2007, when it suffered a sharp electoral setback (see Appendices G and H). Its parliamentary representation began in 1995 and allowed it to initiate debates on topics which have nationalist overtones such as water policy, regional media policies, demographics and autonomous financing.¹³ However, to date it has not been part of the regional government. The election of Labordeta to Congress in 2000, an arena in which nationalist parties often fare badly, was seen as an important landmark giving the CHA a voice in Madrid and an opportunity to defend Aragonese interests there. In the General Election held in March 2000 the CHA obtained 10.48 per cent of the vote which was double that obtained by the PAR and almost as high as their percentage of the vote in the 1999 regional elections (see Appendix G).¹⁴ However, in the Regional Election of 2007 it lost over 40,000 votes. This setback was due to several factors. Firstly, to a series of mistakes made in problematic pacts in Zaragozan municipal government, secondly, to the fact that it did not place sufficient weight on the nationalism aspect of its *raison d'être*, placing greater emphasis on its socialism and environmentalism 'pillars' and thirdly, to the fact that once the threat of the water transfer proposed in the PHN 2000 had receded many protest voters returned to their original political allegiances or abstained. In the General Election of 2008 it lost 56,000 votes and failed to hold onto its seat partly as a result of its

¹² For instance in the interview with Chesús Bernal.

¹³ 'Los diputados de CHA marcan la línea', *Aragón Libre*, No 37, June 2000, pp. 6-7.

¹⁴ See Manuel Alcántara and Antonia Martínez (eds.) '*Las elecciones autonómicas en España 1980-1997* (Madrid: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, 1998) pp. 61, 67.

downturn in popularity and partly as a result of the imminent retirement of Labordeta due to ill-health.¹⁵

Personalities / networks / intellectuals

The leading figures of the CHA have been drawn predominantly from academia, cultural and linguistic associations, groups concerned with defence of territory and alternative movements with the area from which they were originally drawn often influencing their priorities and the way in which they regard symbols frequently associated with nationalism such as history, language, landscape and natural elements. Moreover, all were young when the CHA was set up and had little or no experience of politics. Their ‘civil society’ origins contrasting sharply with the PAR, whose leading figures have been predominantly career politicians many of whom have legal backgrounds.

The first President of the CHA, Eduardo Vicente de Vera (1986-88) brought to it a strong linguistic aspect and the desire to avoid creating symbols in order to focus on the future rather than the past, the latter not necessarily shared by all of its founders especially those with a keen interest in historical aspects. He was a teacher and literary figure, forerunner in the recuperation of the Aragonese language in the mid-1970s and 1980s and one of the first to publish works in Aragonés. He had been a member of the PSA and was one of the founders of the Consello d’a Fabla and brought many Consello members to the Chunta which in turn gave it a strong linguistic focus. He left the presidency of the CHA in 1988, for family and work reasons, at a point when considerable emphasis within the party was being placed on recovering the past. The slogan of the forthcoming Asamblea Nacional was to be *Recuperar el pasado y hacer el futuro*, something which caused him a great deal of concern, ‘recovering the past filled me with fear, that one can not do anything with the past, you have to look to the future’.¹⁶ In 1991, he was invited by the President of Aragon’s other territorial party, the PAR, to take up the post of Director of Culture and later Director of Consumption in the coalition Governments in which it participated. Four years later he joined the ranks of the PAR and has worked as a

¹⁵ José Antonio Labordeta died on 19 September 2010.

¹⁶ Interview with Eduardo Vicente de Vera.

civil servant in the Diputación General de Zaragoza. In his brief period as president of CHA he was keen to make pacts with other parties, such as PAR, because the CHA considered them to be *aragonesistas*, the left-wing PSOE and in particular the IU with which the CHA carried out a series of projects. He would have favoured a union with the PAR; however, ideas of such pacts disappeared when he left the presidency of the CHA.¹⁷ His relations with both the CHA and the PAR have afforded him valuable first-hand insights into the workings and thinking of both of Aragon's territorial parties.

The second President, Azucena Lozano (1988-95), a university maths lecturer and CHA town councillor in Huesca, is credited with paving the way for the CHA's entry into the Cortes de Aragón in 1995 and brought to the CHA an environmental vision of respect and dignity for natural resources, be it mountains or rivers. She came to the CHA after having been president of a group of Aragonese emigrants in Madrid and was one of its founding members. Having lived as an emigrant in Madrid she had first-hand experience of her family leaving their homeland for work. She has a strong sense of Aragonese natural heritage protection from the perspective of conservation, ecologism, sustainability and provision for future generations. Her husband Lorenzo Lascorz, who was also one of the founders of the CHA, editor of the *aragonesista* newspaper *Siete de Aragón* and co-founder of Coordinadora Aragonesa de Pueblos afectados por Embalses (COAPE), has strong links with the social movement 'Por la dignidad de la montaña' and the struggle to prevent the flooding of Pyrenean valleys in order to construct large reservoirs and dams. She views Aragonese resources from an ecological viewpoint of sustainability and improving her surroundings so that her descendents have more 'possibilities'. She advocates the application of a global perspective to the local. She is of the opinion that the Ebro is important to the CHA not as a symbol but 'because it carries with it much of what Aragon is'. The views expressed by Lozano in the interview on defence of Aragon's ecological heritage and natural resources, 'aggressions' against its environment by large companies (electric, energy) that exploit Aragonese resources and reference to recovering Aragon's 'dignity' are clearly evident in the proceedings of the two Asambleas Nacionales when she was president of the party,

¹⁷ Interview with Eduardo Vicente de Vera.

in which there was a strong focus on ecological issues. This marked a shift from the linguistic focus of the previous presidency.

The CHA's third President, Bizén Fuster (1995-2008), the only one not from a university or teaching background, being by profession a Local Government Inspector, brought to it a strong sense of defence of territory and culture and views the Ebro and water from an environmentalist and European perspective. Like Lozano he supports the concept of 'thinking globally to act locally' and, like the rest of the CHA supports the postulates of the New Water Culture 'with its defence of territory, its support of territorial balance of all zones, the principle of river basin unity and its rationality from a scientific point of view'.¹⁸ He has been a member of various cultural bodies and has published articles on cultural and *aragonesista* themes.¹⁹ Fuster strongly identifies with defence of the principle of unity of the river basin, which is a model of cooperation between the autonomous communities along its banks, sustainability, the New Water Culture, which advocates an ecologically sustainable use of water resources and defence of the European Water Framework Directive which promotes a policy of sustainable management of water throughout the EU, water management based on the fundamental principle of the unity of the river basin, improvement of the quality of its waters and prevention of further deterioration of the ecological systems associated with them.

Chesús Bernal, Secretary General from 1986-1998 and currently Secretary for Institutional Policy, comes from a university background and came to the CHA via cultural associations such as RENA and the Consello d'a Fabla Aragonesa. He is a Doctor of Romance Philology, lecturer in French Philology at the University of Zaragoza and author of publications on literary, philology, linguistic and socio-cultural themes. He was a candidate for President of the Aragonese Government in 2003 and 2007 and is a spokesman for the parliamentary group of the CHA and a Parliamentary deputy for Zaragoza. Interestingly, two other CHA figures, Nieves Ibeas and Antonio Gaspar, also emanate from the University's French Philology Department. Bernal identifies with historiography, identifying Aragon's history as a

¹⁸ Interview with Bizén Fuster.

¹⁹ These included Instituto de Estudios Altoaragoneses, Centro de Estudios del Somontano, Consello d'a Fabla Aragonesa, Instituto Aragonés de Antropología and Rolde de Estudios Aragoneses.

symbol of the CHA, and with an environmental and European approach to water. He argues that the Ebro is a formula or a reference of the CHA's way of understanding water policy, that is, by defending the European principle, as set out in the European Water Framework Directive and the principle of unity of the river basin. The CHA's opposition to the transfer of water, he argues, is based on the European Water Framework Directive and the principle that rivers should be allowed to follow their natural course and not be transferred to other places.²⁰ This emphasis on European legislation to support the CHA's opposition to water transfer is not nationalistic, but pragmatic in that by demonstrating that the water transfer proposed in the PHN 2000 breaches the European Framework Directive it is unlikely that the Spanish Government would receive European funding necessary for the project to go ahead. The CHA has used its affiliation with environmentalism, the New Water Culture and unity of the river basin as an effective way of opposing the transfer of water as opposed to more overtly nationalistic arguments.

Its current President, Nieves Ibeas (2008-), is a lecturer at Zaragoza University and was Vice Rector of Social and Cultural Projection. She is a Doctor of French Philology and has a degree in Romance Philology. She was a founding member of the Seminario Interdisciplinar de Estudios de la Mujer of the Universidad de Zaragoza and is the author of various books and articles on literature and feminism. She became a Parliamentary deputy in June 2007. Having joined CHA in 1991 she does not have connections with the foundational groups and associations of her predecessors in the presidency. Her perception of the importance of the Ebro to the party differs from that of her predecessors, seeing it as an element that was of great importance to the CHA at its inception, 'we were born linked to the Ebro, we were born in opposition to the large reservoirs that were capable of wiping out our village in the Pyrenees', and in a more symbolic way. She was a strident campaigner against the mini-transfer proposal to Barcelona 2008.

In contrast to the PAR, the CHA has links with a highly active intellectual and associative element which prioritises cultural and historical aspects. The most important of the cultural associations is the Rolde de Estudios Aragoneses (REA)

²⁰ Interview with Chesús Bernal.

considered in Chapter 5 and the Aragonese language associations Consello d' a Fbla Aragonesa (Fuellas), el Ligallo de Fablans de l'Aragonés (Oracle), Asociación Nogará (religada). The objectives of the latter are principally the diffusion, protection and teaching of Aragonés although they also take part in and support other *aragonesista* aspects. More recently, the CHA has actively supported the study of *aragonesismo* and Aragonese culture, history and language through the Fundación Gaspar Torrente, set up in 1998.

As shown in Chapter 5, these associative networks and intellectuals have made a huge contribution to the study of Aragonese history and culture and *aragonesismo* and its history. Whilst the individuals who belong to these networks provided an important ideological and charismatic bridge with left-wing and nationalist organisations of the period just prior to the CHA's foundation and the benefit of their experience, they also brought with them the historical and cultural perspectives, focuses and priorities described in the previous chapter and whilst recognising the Ebro as one of the defining factor of Aragonese identity, they did not place it or natural features of the Aragonese landscape high on their list of priorities. As we have seen, articles relating to Aragonese history are ubiquitous in *Rolde* whilst any relating to the geographical discourse of nationalism are almost completely absent as are intellectuals from the discipline of geography. Consequently, as a result of these influences the CHA has placed less emphasis on popular symbols of Aragonese identity and on symbols which form part of the popular imagination such as the Ebro, although the majority of those interviewed recognise and acknowledge the importance of the Ebro in the popular imagination. In its II Asamblea Nazional proceedings the CHA recognised that its membership was based on personal and associative bonds and the necessary to project the party more widely.²¹

It could be argued, then, that the CHA is made up of, on the one hand, of a leadership which takes an environmental view of Aragon's natural heritage and resources and on the other that it reflects the influences of a network of historians and intellectuals who place considerable emphasis on the past, historiography and artistic, cultural and architectural heritage. Left-wing *aragonesismo* has idealised aspects of the past as

²¹ II Asamblea Nazional, p. 7.

important constituents of Aragonese identity such as its medieval political and foral laws. As a result it often appears not to place sufficient emphasis on the future, seeking its symbols in the past, or on geographical discourses of territory, natural features and landscape.²²

Essence of party and ideology

The main pillars of CHA ideology are fourfold: federalism, *aragonesismo*, socialism and environmentalism.²³ Interestingly, nationalism is not usually listed amongst them although the party defines itself as nationalist. It refers to its political project as a combination of *aragonesismo* and socialism and to its nationalism mainly in the sense of a defining element.²⁴ Following its electoral downturn in 2007 its VIII National Assembly attempted to address this lack of attention to nationalism arguing that it should place greater emphasis on the Aragonese left-wing nationalism that defines it and that it must constantly pay attention to the ideological weight it places on each of its basic components: left-wing orientation, *aragonesismo* and nationalism.²⁵ It remains to be seen whether nationalism will have a more prominent position in the future. In addition to these main pillars it lists other struggles and values with which it is involved as multilingualism, ecologism, feminism, anti-racism, international solidarity and the New Water Culture.²⁶ It has a strong sense of 'Europeanism', a factor which also strongly influences its position on the environment and water transfer, and introduces a European as opposed to localist or traditional nationalist perspective.

Regarding the first of its pillars *aragonesismo*, in October 1986, three months after its launch it set out its essence as follows:

²² Interview with Eduardo Vicente de Vera.

²³ 'Por el pleno autogobierno hacia el Estado Federal', *Aragón Libre*, No 36, March 2000, p. 4.

²⁴ See for instance II Asamblea Nazional, p. 29. III Asamblea Nazional refers to its socialist and democratic project, p. 33; VI Asamblea Nazional to a project based on socialism, Aragonese nationalism and solidarity, p. 31; VII Asamblea Nazional to transforming Aragon from a basis of socialism, Aragonese nationalism and solidarity, p. 5; VIII Asamblea Nazional to a socialist, democratic and republican project p. 7; VIII Asamblea Nazional states that its political project has to make more specific the left-wing Aragonese nationalism that defines it p. 17 and later refers to its project as *aragonesista*, left-wing, ecologist and for its country, p. 30.

²⁵ VIII Asamblea Nazional, p. 17.

²⁶ 'Ixo Rai recibe el III Premio Derechos y Libertades de Aragón', *Aragón Libre*, No. 45, Winter 2003, p. 21.

Under the name of UNION ARAGONESISTA we have set up an *aragonesista* and left-wing political organisation capable of uniting all Aragonese who are dissatisfied with the current political representation of our people in a common political and social project for Aragon that will revitalise it and assure it of a better future.²⁷

Here the *aragonesista* essence of the party is clearly associated with its nature as an alternative to political representation by state parties and the fact that its political and social project is designed specifically for Aragon and not Spain as a whole. Further definition of what it understands by *aragonesismo* is not frequent in its publications. One exception is its III Asamblea Nazional where it referred to *aragonesismo* as a more or less extended social sentiment and nationalism as one of its political articulations stating that nationalism is the political proposal that defines and identifies it in the political spectrum. It argues that *aragonesismo* could bind it with sectors that have misgivings about nationalism and the connotations that link it with anti-values such as chauvinism, racism, intolerance, lack of solidarity, and irrationalism.²⁸ The CHA considers its nationalism to be a combination of the principles of self-determination and universalism and hence its adoption of the wider tenets of environmentalism and Europeanism.²⁹

Its second ‘pillar’ is federalism. It is in favour of a federal state ‘in which the rights and obligations of all its constituent parts are guaranteed on a plane of equality and reciprocity’, full self-government for Aragon and recognition of Aragonese nationality in accordance with the definition given in Article I of the Statute of Autonomy.³⁰ It sees federalism as a way of articulating Aragonese sovereignty and advocates reform of Preliminary Articles III and VIII of the Spanish Constitution in favour of a federal state as ‘a formula for respect of plurality of wills amongst the diverse nationalities and eliminating the restrictions established, for example, in the current Article 145’.³¹

²⁷ ‘Perfiles ideológicos’, *Aragón Libre*, No. 0, October 1986, p. 1.

²⁸ Chunta Aragonesista, III Asamblea Nazional, Teruel, 4-5 April 1992, p. 29.

²⁹ III Asamblea Nazional, p. 28.

³⁰ ‘Bases para el debate sobre la profundización del autogobierno’, <http://www.chunta.com/esque18.htm> [accessed 27 July 2010]. See also ‘Por el pleno autogobierno hacia el Estado Federal’, *Aragón Libre*, No 36, March 2000, p. 4.

³¹ ‘Bases para el debate sobre la profundización del autogobierno’.

The third of its pillars, socialism and the New Left, receive a great deal of emphasis in its publications and documents. New Left parties embrace some or all of the following characteristics: left-wing, democratic socialism, ecology, ecosocialism, pacifism, federalism. They are progressive, frequently fall within the category of Green parties and support the principles of ecological sustainability. In the Spanish context regionalist and nationalist parties of New Left orientation include the CHA, Bloc Nacionalista Valencià, Partit Socialista de Mallorca, Partido Socialista de Menorca, Iniciativa per Catalunya Verds, Nueva Izquierda Andaluza.³² They provide a territorial alternative to the state-wide parties in the communities they represent. They seek respect for the identity of the various peoples that make up Spain supporting, for example, *aragonesismo*/Aragonese nationalism, *valencianismo*, *pancatalanismo*/Catalan nationalism, *catalanismo*/catalan nationalism and the development of their communities' self-government from a federalist perspective. The II Asambleya Nazional of the CHA stressed the importance placed on constructing a modern political theory in accordance with the currents of the New Left.³³ According to the CHA the creation of a New Left is necessary to face the problems of industrialised societies and is achieved by breaking with dogmas of the classical left and taking on new concepts such as ecology, pacifism and humanism.³⁴ Its III Asambleya Nazional in 1992 listed its aims as recuperation of Aragonese dignity, reconstruction of an Aragonese socialist alternative and upholding the above tenets.³⁵ Middle class socialism, such as that of the CHA, often fuels accusations of utopianism and not connecting with the working class vote.³⁶

When setting out what the party stands for considerable emphasis is placed on its socialist and left-wing orientation and ideals: a categorisation which it could be argued is restrictive. For the representation of the territory as a whole this has significant limitations as it rules out a following of people to the right of this

³² One should not confuse this group of parties which in the wider European context are referred to as 'New Left' parties with a Spanish political party that went by the name New Left, the Partido Democrático de la Nueva Izquierda (1997-2001) which began as a current within the Izquierda Unida and following its expulsion became part of the PSOE.

³³ II Asambleya Nazional, p. 3.

³⁴ II Asambleya Nazional, p. 21.

³⁵ III Asambleya Nazional, 'Vamos adelante!!', 4-5 January 1992, p. 29.

³⁶ In a breakdown of the social and professional extraction of its members 73 per cent were drawn from the professions, academia, teaching, administration, industrialists and students; 24 per cent were industrial and commercial workers; 1 per cent housewives and only 2 per cent from agriculture and farming, II Asambleya Nazional, p. 6.

position. For the Ebro, it incorporates a view of resources based firmly in the more universal libertarian and environmental tenets of the ‘New Left’ whilst at times contradicting this with a strong sense of defence ‘what is ours’, particularly when resources are under threat.³⁷ A similar contradiction also occurs in its position on conservation and ecology, which also incorporates the same possessive terminology which introduces a contradiction between universality and defence of what belongs to Aragon.³⁸

In addition to its left-wing, socialist descriptors the CHA describe itself as ‘progressive’. A definition of the progressive ethos put forward by Nick Pearce and Julia Margo could aptly be applied to the CHA:

The term ‘progressive’ is a necessarily loose one, serving to brigade a broad spectrum of liberal, social democratic and environmentalist thinking. But insofar as it is possible to erect a conceptual architecture around a signifier of disparate political currents, contemporary progressive politics can be argued to rest on commitments to social justice and environmental sustainability, and perhaps less clearly, to a civic liberalism. Social justice is the core for the progressive project – at its conceptual heart if not the sovereign virtue.³⁹

Once again, progressivism with its social democratic and environmentalist thinking seems to predominate over nationalistic tenets relegating the latter to a secondary position in CHA priorities.

The fourth of its ‘pillars’, and one which also has a very high profile, is environmentalism which has a strong bearing on how it views the Ebro and water. Throughout its history it has embraced environmental and ecological concepts and advocates collaboration with ecological movements and with those in defence of Aragonese territory and, since its emergence in 1999, with the New Water Culture. Its members have always had close links with social and ecological associations and movements opposed to flooding mountain valleys for more reservoirs and this aspect

³⁷ For instance, ‘we are Aragonese who feel a deep and true love for **our** land. As a result we put forward a policy that is decidedly Aragonese and *aragonesista*, in defence of what is ours, in defence of **our** identity, **our** culture, **our** being as a people, of all of the traits that identify us.’ ‘¿Por qué Unión Aragonesista?’, p. 3.

³⁸ ‘¿Por qué Unión Aragonesista?’, *Aragón Libre*, No. 1, p. 3.

³⁹ Nick Pearce and Julia Margo, Introduction to *Politics for a New Generation: The Progressive Moment* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 4-5.

strongly influence its views on water and the Ebro, being opposed to the construction of more dams and reservoirs that have high socio-ecological costs. Its III Asamblea Nazional set out its aim to collaborate with such movements and it offered to be a political and institutional channel for them arguing that, for it, defence of the 'Land' is inexorably part of the future of the New Left.⁴⁰ Its ecological commitment is also highlighted in *Aragón Libre*, 'we are with those who fight for the conservation of our natural environment, our fauna, our rivers, our mountains, our countryside and our environment'.⁴¹

Like the PAR, the CHA has a strong sense of defence of territory but with a strong environmental focus. For it defence of territory equates with 'defence of our resources and ecosystems against the policy of exploitation by international corporations'.⁴² Whilst the PAR's defence of territory is based primarily in the defence of economic interests the CHA's is a socio-ecological defence of ecosystems and mountain communities affected by dams and reservoirs. As indicated earlier its 'hydrological vision' differs considerably from that of the PAR in that it maintains that reservoirs and unsustainable water use are not a solution in a depopulated area such as Aragon. It is therefore opposed to hydraulic projects which have a high socio-environmental impact such as the reservoirs of Yesa, Biscarrués and Santaliestra and identifies with the Pyrenean popular movement, which under the slogan, *Por la dignidad de la montaña*, promotes defence of the integrity of the mountain area and its development in a sustainable manner. Its opposition to the construction of more reservoirs is partly a response to Aragon's problems of population displacement, emigration and loss of identity as a result of having to leave ones birthplace and partly a reflection of its environmental and ecological perspectives. Its vision of sustainable use of water is based on improvement of existing irrigation schemes, which has the potential for considerable water savings, as opposed to the creation of more irrigated land through major hydrological works such as reservoirs and dams. It does not say what it would do with the 'surplus' water that other areas want, however, this may be because without further regulation of Aragon's rivers through dam and reservoir construction there would be no surplus. It

⁴⁰ III Asamblea Nazional, p. 23.

⁴¹ '¿Por qué Unión Aragonesa?', *Aragón Libre*, No. 1, p. 3.

⁴² Editorial, 'Defensa del Territorio', *Aragón Libre*, No. 2, p. 1.

makes broad statements about supporting sustainable development and the concepts put forward by the New Water Culture.

Following the emergence of the New Water Culture in 1999 the CHA has strongly identified with the concepts put forward by it:

The New Water Culture that is making its way (and which only CHA coherently defends in the parliamentary sphere) not only discredits some projects of large-scale reservoirs, but calls for the rationalisation of agrarian policy. This has brought us to demand that hydraulic projects that do not have an impact on or are rejected by society should not be delayed and that investment in the modernisation of irrigation should be prioritised.⁴³

The New Water Culture advocates an ecologically sustainable use of water resources, which implies the conservation of its quality after use, as well as that of the ecosystems, societies and territories in which it is generated and consumed.⁴⁴ The CHA claims to be its political arm and has utilised the concepts put forward by it to support its opposition to the 2000 PHN and the construction of more reservoirs:

The solution is a new culture of water that is part of a basic principle: no new large-scale reservoirs, neither in the Aragonese Pyrenees nor in the Catalan Pyrenees, nor in any other place; nor water transfers between river basins neither the Ebro, nor the Ródano, nor the Noguera Pallaresa or the Segre.

‘No’ to large-scale reservoirs, which are essential for the exploitation of the Ebro for the east coast regions.⁴⁵

Moreover, New Water Culture concepts on the rational use of water as a non-speculative resource are also seen by the CHA as beneficial in resolving water conflicts between the mountain and lowland areas of Aragon.⁴⁶

The CHA’s adoption of the more universal tenets of the New Water Culture runs contrary to traditional perceptions of nationalist parties being concerned solely with

⁴³ ‘Una nueva cultura del agua’, *Aragón Libre*, No. 31, January 1999, p. 11. See also Fundación Nueva Cultura del Agua: <http://www.unizar.es/fnca/>.

⁴⁴ José Manuel Nicolau Ibarra, ‘Política hidráulica: hacia la imparabla Nueva Cultura de Agua’, *Siete de Aragón*, September 2000, pp. 28-30, p. 28.

⁴⁵ ‘400.000 manifestantes contra el trasvase’, *Aragón Libre* No. 43, June, 2002, p. 4.

⁴⁶ Interview with Javier Mur, *Aragón Libre*, No. 53, 2004, p. 7.

the interests of their own territory but is perfectly in line with its universal ecological thinking. Protection of the environment has become an important part of the political discourse of many present-day nationalist parties, of both left and right orientation, throughout Europe. This arises out of the fact that many are concerned with the defence of their valued environments, heritage protection and environmental stewardship either as a result of their ecological convictions or in response to the despoliation of their territory through the exploitation of natural resources by central government. From a nationalist point of view, environmental despoliation is often seen as destroying the link between the land and its people and nationalist movements are frequently 'ignited' by this. Examples include Germany's landscape preservation movements, Plaid Cymru in Wales and the former USSR where devastated natural environments exacerbated suppressed nationalist feelings.⁴⁷ For many nationalist parties, environmentalism frequently plays an important part in identity creation and the preservation and the creation of a sense of connection with a particular place.⁴⁸ According to Olsen, when viewed in this way 'environmentalism has as much to do with protecting a piece of ourselves, a sense of our identity, as it does with protecting forests, rivers, and lakes.'⁴⁹

There is also a sense of protecting the natural heritage of the territory for future generations. Deudney, as we have seen in Chapter 6, argues that an intergenerational aspect is often associated with environmental nationalism.⁵⁰ For the CHA defence of the environment is linked with defence of territory and defence of Aragon's future, which it argues lies in the sustainable use of water resources.⁵¹ In an interview in *Siete de Aragón* Fuster argued that firstly, the CHA sees central government proposals to transfer water as assaults on its territory and environment. Secondly, that the CHA incorporates an ecological and environmental awareness with a global conception of country and territorial planning in order to formulate a plan of action that takes into account the social and environmental impact of such works. Thirdly, that employment and industrial transformation should occur where the resources are

⁴⁷ According to Ernst Moritz Arndt protection of the natural environment is synonymous with the protection of the nation. See quotation p. 57, note 89.

⁴⁸ See Deudney, p. 130.

⁴⁹ Olsen, p. 5.

⁵⁰ Deudney, p. 130-31.

⁵¹ Bizén Fuster, 'Somos el aldabonazo de Madrid', *Siete de Aragón*, No. 50, 24 February-2 March 1995, p. 28.

and only in instances where there is low socio-environmental impact. Finally, that the CHA differs from parties that defend state policies in Aragon in that it has a political project specifically for Aragon.⁵²

In addition to environmental and New Left tenets which colour the CHA's view on water and the Ebro there is also the influence of its 'Europeanism', an area in which similarities can be drawn with a number of other European regionalist and nationalist parties. In the past, minority nationalist parties were frequently perceived as parochial with tendencies towards a 'closed' vision of their nation.⁵³ However, scholars now argue that the European dimension has led territorial movements to internationalise their appeal and demands.⁵⁴ 'Europeanism' indicates an evolution of such parties away from a 'localistic' and closed vision of their nation to a more international one far removed from the Romantic and sentimental perceptions of the natural environment prevalent in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century nationalism, in favour of an ecological and environmental perception. In the 'localistic' vision specific features of their territory such as rivers and mountains were given symbolic and iconographic status and nations were viewed as 'primordial, organic outgrowths of nature' with their character determined by this.⁵⁵ However, ecological and environmental perceptions focus on defence of valued environments, heritage protection and environmental stewardship.

The adoption of a pan-European approach is used by minority sub-state parties to harness a wide range of benefits that go with it, both of a financial nature such as opportunities for structural funding as well as access to decision making at the European level, the opportunity to participate in European political lobbying associations and as a means of seeking recourse to international precedents and directives to defend their territory, for instance, against exploitation and environmental degradation.⁵⁶ European institutions, networks and lobbying

⁵² Bizén Fuster, 'Somos el aldabonazo de Madrid', *Siete de Aragón*, No. 50, 24 February-2 March 1995, p. 28.

⁵³ Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism*, pp. 167, 169.

⁵⁴ Lynch, 1996 cited by Eve Hepburn, 'Regionalist Party Mobilisation on Immigration', Paper for the 57th UK Political Studies Association (PSA) Annual Conference in Bath, 11-13 April 2007, pp. 1-13 (p. 4), <http://www.psa.ac.uk/2007/pps/Hepburn.pdf> [accessed 6/5/07].

⁵⁵ Kaufmann, 'Naturalizing the Nation', p. 666. See also Lekan, pp. 1-6 and Hutchinson, 'Myth Against Myth', pp. 110-13.

⁵⁶ Hepburn, 'Regionalist Party', p. 4.

associations provide an opportunity structure in which territorial parties are able to develop a new political voice and seek international backing in the face of threats to their environment.⁵⁷ Clearly, in order to follow this route parties must adopt an international approach to their natural resources and their management as demonstrated by the importance placed by the CHA on the EU Water Framework Directive 2000. This was clearly evident in interviews with Fuster and Bernal who argue that the CHA's opposition to water transfer is based on this directive. In addition to the importance placed on the directive the CHA has taken its objections to the PHN 2000 and proposed water transfer and the 2007 proposal for a mini-transfer to Barcelona to the European Parliament. It has also participated in a demonstration in opposition to these proposals in Brussels in 2000 organised by Las Plataformas de Defensa del Ebro under the slogan '*Ni un euro para este PHN. Por una nueva cultura del agua.*' ('Not a Euro for this PHN. For a new water culture') and the Marcha Azul, '*Por una nueva cultura del agua. En defensa del medio ambiente.*' ('For a new water culture. In defence of the environment').

Clearly environmentalism, the New Left and 'Europeanism' are integral parts of the CHA's thinking. This raises the question of whether such tendencies, which are not specific to Aragon, but part of prevailing currents amongst a number of other minority territorial parties in Europe, replace true/traditional nationalist thinking or whether they are simply part of a more modern nationalism that looks to universal, scientific and rational interpretations of its surroundings as opposed to romantic and sentimental ones. Certainly, the CHA regards its views on water and the Ebro as falling within these scientific and rational categories. However, the adoption of scientific, environmental, economic and rational arguments in its opposition to water transfer has the disadvantage of not being exclusively the domain of regionalist or nationalist parties. As Guillermo Fatás pointed out, environmental awareness and the New Water Culture mean that it is no longer a problem exclusively of political programmes or of who is the most regionalist or nationalist but a problem of rationality, where almost everyone opposes the large-scale manipulation of nature and a scarce natural resource such as water. That is to say, it is a matter 'common sense' although the logic is different the situation in 1800 or 1900 when the need was

⁵⁷ Hepburn, 'Regionalist Party', p. 11.

for water to feed agriculture or starve.⁵⁸ Thus, the CHA's objective of encouraging its members 'to convert what is, in many cases, sentimental nationalism into a nationalism based on a scientific foundation', whilst rational and in line with modern-day thinking has the disadvantage of not being exclusively nationalist as the scientific arguments adopted could equally be taken up by non-nationalist parties.⁵⁹

Throughout its existence the CHA has identified with European 'left-libertarian' parties which have appeared under 'New Left', ecology and green labels.⁶⁰ Like it, these 'left-libertarian' parties appeared in Europe in the 1970s and 1980s. Their rise saw a convergence of ecologism and New Left ideas; focused on ecology, energy, feminism and nuclear energy and armament. More recently, the CHA updated 'the struggles' in which it is engaged to also include multilingualism, anti-racism, international solidarity and New Water Culture.⁶¹ These 'left-libertarian' parties draw their voters from the ranks of the younger, well-educated middle class, have left-of-centre political convictions, subscribe to 'post-materialist' values and sympathise with environmental, feminist and peace movements and are not simply narrow environmentalist pressure groups but have evolved to address a wide range of left-libertarian issues.⁶² These characteristics are also typical of the CHA.

On initial examination the fact that the CHA has incorporated a high degree of Europeanism, 'new politics', ecologism and environmentalism would appear to run contrary to traditional perceptions of regionalist and nationalist parties as exclusively orientated towards their own particular territory. However, recent comparative studies show this to be part of a wider European trend within this 'family' of parties, as political science researchers have labelled them, and one which affords many benefits.⁶³ To understand how 'New Left', 'Europeanism' and environmental ways

⁵⁸ Interview with Guillermo Fatás.

⁵⁹ II Asambleya Nazional, p. 24.

⁶⁰ Herbert P. Kitschelt, 'Left-Libertarian Parties: Explaining Innovation in Competitive Party Systems', *World Politics*, 40:2 (1988), 194-234 (p. 194). These parties appeared first in Scandinavia, France and the Netherlands and more recently in Austria, Belgium, Switzerland and West Germany.

⁶¹ 'Ixo Rai recibe el III Premio Derechos y Libertades de Aragón', *Aragón Libre*, No. 45, 2003, p. 21.

⁶² See Kitschelt, pp. 198 and 202.

⁶³ See Hepburn, 'Regionalist Party', Kitschelt, De Winter and Türsan, Massetti and Beatriz Acha Ugarte and Margarita Gómez-Reino Cachafeiro, 'Towards an Understanding of the Ideology of Nationalist Parties: Dimensions and Comparative Framework, Paper for ECPR Joint Sessions

of thinking shape the CHA's attitude towards the Ebro and water it is necessary to consider studies that have been carried out of regionalist and nationalist parties in the European context to appreciate how its thinking forms part of a wider European trend. The PAR, on the other hand, while embracing some European thinking, in particular regarding the European Water Framework Directive, depuration of residual water and the transfer of water between river basins has a territorial rather than international attitude towards natural resources, which as we have seen in the previous chapter, incorporates some primordial, essential and Romantic tenets which the CHA does not.

Studies of European sub-state regionalist and nationalist parties are increasingly exploring the extent to which they are responding to the attractions of becoming more European and more international in their outlook and adopting principles common to European Union (EU) thinking such as environmental policies, multiculturalism, and diversity.⁶⁴ It is argued that these parties adopt EU principles out of a desire to be perceived as credible, progressive and modern and in order to call on international precedents and directives to defend their stance on issues affecting their territory, for instance environmental degradation and immigration.⁶⁵ At its III Asambleya Nazional the CHA set out its aim of maintaining a link with European Greens parties and formations of Europe's New Left.⁶⁶ It has been a member of Izquierda de los Pueblos from 1987-1999, a member of the European Free Alliance from 2004 and a member of the Green Group in the European Parliament.⁶⁷ In the elections for the European Parliament in 2004 the coalition 'Europa de los Pueblos', to which it belongs, obtained a euro-deputy.⁶⁸

Workshops. Edinburgh 28 March -2 April 2003, pp. 1-21,
<http://www.essex.ac.uk/ecpr/events/jointsessions/paperarchive/edinburgh/ws3/UgarteCachafeiro.pdf>.

⁶⁴ See for instance Lieven De Winter and Margarita Gómez-Reino, 'European Integration and Ethno-regionalist Parties', *Party Politics*, 8.4, (2002), 483-503 and Hepburn, 'Regionalist Party', p. 1.

⁶⁵ Hepburn, 'Regionalist Party', p. 1.

⁶⁶ III Asambleya Nazional, p. 26.

⁶⁷ In 1999 Izquierda de los Pueblos consisted of 8 left-wing nationalist parties - CHA, Euskadiko Ezkerra, Partido Socialista Galego-Esquerda, Unitat del Poble Valencià, Entesa dels Nacionalistes d'Esquerra de Catalunya, Asamblea Canaria, Partido Socialista de Mallorca and Partido Socialista de Menorca. The European Free Alliance consists of around 30 progressive and democratic nationalist and regionalist parties that defend diversity, cultures and languages in Europe. It has 5 Euro deputies, 2 from Scotland, 1 from Wales, 1 from the minorities of Latvia and 1 from 'Europa de los Pueblos' which the CHA belongs to.

⁶⁸ The coalition "Europa de los Pueblos" consists of Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya, Eusko Alkartasuna y Chunta Aragonesista amongst others.

A disadvantage of 'Europeanisation' is that it can be seen by the electorate as a move away from the 'territorially based' specificity on which the party was founded.⁶⁹ One of the criticisms of the CHA following the dramatic downturn in electoral success in the May 2007 Regional Elections was that it had concentrated too much on its socialist, progressive leanings at the expense of 'Aragon, *aragonesismo* and defence of what is ours'.⁷⁰ This presents an indication of the pitfalls of appearing to place less emphasis on what is traditionally regarded as the prime objective of a territorially-based party.

It appears, then, that rather than one ideology, the CHA has a number of parallel ideologies of which nationalism is not necessarily the most predominant; this is one of the reasons why it does not look at water and the Ebro in an orthodox nationalist way but rather in a way influenced by its ecologist and New Left beliefs. The emphasis placed on these other aspects results in a dilution of the nationalism aspect which significantly is not listed as one of its pillars. In Vicente de Vera's view, in the 1980s to call oneself nationalist was a way of being belligerent in order to position oneself. He maintained that to be a nationalist had much more impact then than it has today.⁷¹

How the Ebro is viewed in *Aragón Libre* and party documents

The CHA's official publication and vehicle of expression, the quarterly magazine *Aragón Libre*, has been in existence since 1987.⁷² This magazine along with other documentary sources such as the publications and proceedings of the party's Conferenzias and Asambleyas Nacionales, its internet site (set up in 1999), press releases, and policy documents on water-related matters make it possible to study the party's perspective on water and the Ebro.

First and foremost *Aragón Libre* clearly reflects the CHA's ecological vision in relation to water policy and the Ebro, 'in Chunta Aragonesista we understand that all

⁶⁹ Hepburn, 'Regionalist Party', p. 2.

⁷⁰ Response posted on blog of the CHA deputy Chesús Juste from *jose*, 31 May 2007.

⁷¹ Interview with Eduardo Vicente de Vera.

⁷² 'Aragón Libre', <<http://www.chunta.org/aragonlibre.php>> [accessed 7/06/07].

action on territory has to take into account as a determining factor, the ecological factor'.⁷³ Secondly, it reflects its commitment to the defence of the people and villages affected by the proposed construction of dams and reservoirs. The construction of reservoirs is viewed as a threat to the social structure of Aragon's mountain communities, an agent of further depopulation, and an ecological problem.⁷⁴ Thirdly, defence of water from 'outside threats' is a predominant feature of how the Ebro is viewed by the CHA. At the height of the controversies surrounding the transfer of water from the Ebro basin, the CHA's overriding ecological perspective towards water can be seen to take on a more sentimental and symbolic aspect and it is possible to note the use of more emotive symbolism and terminology and increased use of the term Ebro as opposed to water. This includes titles and references such as 'The battle of the Ebro, Aragon can not lose it', 'CHA has got wet to defend the Ebro', 'Against exploitation', 'No to transfers, our rivers and valleys are not for sale'.⁷⁵ In addition there are visual representations of CHA members in the River Ebro with an Aragonese flag and the emblematic Basilica of Pilar behind them, a powerful combination of popular symbols.⁷⁶ A back cover photograph with the title 'CHA takes the islands to denounce the transfer', once again focuses on an image of the Ebro with the Basilica of Pilar in the background.⁷⁷ Images therefore incorporate the powerful combination of two popular symbols, the Ebro the Basílica del Pilar, without the CHA overtly taking up these symbols.

It is the prospect of Central Government proposals for water transfers to other areas of Spain that concentrates the imagery on the Ebro and raises the idea of defence of the Ebro rather than the Ebro being key a theme of Aragonese nationalist party thinking and policies. It is therefore defensive rather than pro-active, a response to outside influences and threats rather than party policy. The frequency of such proposals is a factor which has shaped Aragonese regionalist/nationalist attitudes to water for much of the period from the 1970 to the present time. However, its lay orientation and environmentalism does not totally preclude use of the powerful symbolism and imagery of the Ebro and *el Pilar*.

⁷³ *Aragón Libre*, No. 8, May 1991, p. 1.

⁷⁴ 'CHA ante el Pacto del Agua', *Aragón Libre*, No. 12, Summer 1992, p. 1.

⁷⁵ *Aragón Libre* No. 14, 1993, p. 1; No. 16, 1993, p. 14; No. 16, 1993, p. 14; No. 38, 2000, p.3; No. 38, 2000, back cover; No. 39, p. 8-9.

⁷⁶ 'La batalla del Ebro', *Aragón Libre*, Nos. 14 and 16 1993, p. 1.

⁷⁷ 'CHA toma los islotes del Ebro para denunciar el trasvase', *Aragón Libre*, No. 44, p.24.

Fourthly, *Aragón Libre* reflects the CHA's belief that the construction of reservoirs is not to satisfy Aragon's own water and irrigation needs but the prelude to water transfers to other areas, arguing that, 'Yesa is the foundation stone of the Ebro transfer'. It bases its argument in the fact these works are intended to meet Zaragoza's increased water requirements of 95 hm³ per year, however, the reservoir will store 1,525 hm³ leaving an excess of 1,400 hm³ per year which they argue could be destined for transfer.⁷⁸ The CHA is equally opposed to the reservoirs of Lechago, Biccarrués, Santaliestra, Jánovas, Calcón and Bárcabo and is in favour of cheaper and more ecological alternatives such as recycling and water savings through improvement of existing irrigation systems.⁷⁹

The CHA acknowledge the fact that in the popular imagination irrigation has been associated with an emblematic promise of progress for Aragon and that many believe that any water policy relating to Aragon should be directed towards this objective. However, it argues that it is time to 'de-mythify' old theories put forward by Costa at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries which, in their time were justified and recognise the negative social and ecological impact of these policies in the present day situation and that EU water policy runs counter to this form of agriculture. The CHA's aim is to defend whatever irrigation is necessary for Aragon after first implementing schemes aimed at water savings through improvement of existing irrigation schemes and water treatment plants. It argues against the indiscriminate increase of irrigated land when previous planned schemes have still not been exploited to their full potential and in some cases remain unfinished due to lack of central government funding. It also argues that in the light of Madrid's policy to reduce the amount of new irrigated land throughout Spain reservoirs proposed in the PHN 2000 and the Aragonese Pacto del Agua are not destined for more irrigated land in Aragon but to facilitate water transfers to the Mediterranean regions, thus adding further fuel to its argument that the purpose of the Yesa reservoir is not to satisfy Aragon's own water and irrigation needs but is the prelude to water transfers to more industrialised areas.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ 'Infraestructuras y ecología. La batalla del agua', *Aragón Libre*, No. 16, 1993, p. 14.

⁷⁹ 'Infraestructuras y ecología. La batalla del agua', *Aragón Libre*, No. 16, 1993, p. 14.

⁸⁰ Chesús Yuste, 'Regadíos y trasvases', *Aragón Libre*, No. 23, Autumn 1995, p. 6.

Fifthly, it sets out its reasons for opposition to the transfer of water from the Ebro. In addition to the social impact and ecological consequences of reservoirs, it considers that water transfer will mortgage Aragon's possibilities of future development. Here the opportunity cost of transfer would be that of permanently committing a determined quantity of water for transfer which in the future may be required in Aragon. In addition, water transfer would further increase differences in terms of development between the Mediterranean area and the 'forgotten' interior. The CHA argue that the areas with deficits ought to practice a more rational and efficient use of the water they have available. In the run-up to the 2003 elections, a section in *Aragón Libre* entitled, '*Por una cultura del agua. ¡Trasvases!*', sets out not only social and environmental aspects of its opposition to transfer but brings in the more nationalistic tenets of outside exploitation together with the view that 'our' rivers should be 'viewed as ecosystems full of wealth and history and heritage and not as mere pipes.'⁸¹ Here the opportunity costs are environmental in that the regulation works necessary for water transfers prevent water being used in the sustainable way advocated by the CHA and socio-economic in that the mountain areas affected by the construction of reservoirs subsequently suffer population displacement and loss of land in the valley floor that could be developed for cultivation, industry or services. There is also the heritage cost of destroying part of the Camino de Santiago. The reference to history and heritage has a hint ethno-symbolism but this is not developed.

Significantly, an aspect which does not receive a high profile in *Aragón Libre* is that of the Ebro or water as a source of Aragonese patrimonial wealth. The perception of rivers, natural resources and land as national property, valuable national economic assets and promising self-sufficiency is generally considered to be one of the fundamental tenets of regionalist and nationalist movements. Williams and Smith argue that the idea that political territory could constitute a 'resource deposit', which by right belongs to a particular ethnic community, began to gain ground from the late eighteenth century onwards and that once this concept took root it was inevitable that nationalist movements should make the struggle for their community's exclusive

⁸¹ '*Por una nueva cultura del agua. ¡Trasvases!*', *Aragón Libre*, No. 47, 2003, p. 1.

possession of 'its' scarce resources an important element of their outlook and policies.⁸² This concept of patrimonial wealth is not particularly evident in CHA documents and publications although at times it is referred to indirectly, for instance, to reference to a statement by José Antonio Labordeta, 'Mario Gaviria used to say that we have two sources of enormous wealth in Aragon: water and space'.⁸³ For the most part a view of water as Aragonese wealth is superseded by a commitment to water management on a river basin wide basis.

In the CHA's *Día Nacional de Aragón* Manifestoes there is a much stronger emphasis on the term 'our' with references to 'our' resources and 'attempts to exploit our principal resources, to the transfer of water from the Ebro as opposed to simply water. In addition, there are more references to self-government and the right to decide on Aragon's interests and resources such as water than is present in *Aragón Libre*. As in the rest of its literature the CHA does not take up the aspect of water or the Ebro as part of Aragonese identity, this being assigned to the realm of the popular imagination as opposed to its political *aragonesismo*. In its literature water and the Ebro, although the latter is not always specifically mentioned, form part of an *aragonesista* 'ecological vision of sustainable future development' as opposed to the 'vision of development and future possibilities' based to a significant degree in increased irrigated agriculture of the PAR. Also, grievance as an element of cohesion and a powerful instrument of collective identity is not as apparent in present day the left-wing *aragonesismo* as it was in the post Franco period.

As we have seen there are a number of ways of considering and referring to the Ebro, for instance the river Ebro, the symbol Ebro, the transfer of water from the Ebro, water transfer without reference the Ebro, water in general and irrigation. In the CHA's *Día Nacional de Aragón* Manifestoes reference is made predominantly to the transfer of water from the Ebro, as opposed to simply using the word transfer or transfer of water. This theme is referred to in all of the Manifestoes between 2001 and 2008. In the 2001 Manifesto there is reference to dignity, water and country and

⁸² Williams and Smith, pp. 508-9 who point out that before this time there were only isolated examples of this conception, such as in Ancient Greece and Judea.

⁸³ *Aragón Libre*, No. 24, 1996, p. 1.

the statement 'our rivers and valleys are not for sale'.⁸⁴ The 2002 manifesto combines a demand for full self-government and the power to decide on their own interests and rejection of policies that mortgage Aragon's future such as the PHN and the Ebro transfer.⁸⁵ In 2003, a call for full self-government and 'no' to the transfer go hand in hand in the title of the Manifesto. The most serious threat, they argue, continues to be the Ebro transfer which deepens the imbalance between interior and periphery in favour of the overpopulated Mediterranean Arch and 'sacrifices the future expectations of the Ebro river basin, especially those of Aragon', whose Pyrenean valleys will suffer the construction of large reservoirs to facilitate the transfer of water to other river basins. Historically the mountain area has had to cede resources, not just water but its best land and people. It is not just the few thousand hectares lost to reservoirs but the opportunities for agricultural and industrial activities and development of infrastructures, services and communications that go with them which are essential to future development. Signs of hope are considered to be the huge popular demonstrations against the PHN and the advance of the ideas of the New Water Culture.⁸⁶

In 2004, in the run-up to the General Election, the CHA argued that the Aragonese people are on the verge of a new stage of hope after the defeat of 'the authoritarian and centralist project', a defeat which should bring with it the definitive liquidation of unsustainable and unacceptable projects like the Ebro transfer. Reference is also made to the fact that the intention of the PHN is to exploit one of Aragon's principle resources.⁸⁷ The 2005 manifesto brings together the theme of Aragon's new Statute of Autonomy and the power to decide, which includes specific reference to water and resources.⁸⁸ The theme of the 2006 Manifesto is commitment to a New Statute giving the Aragonese people full self-government and maximum financial autonomy and commitment to the defence of their resources, such as water, in the face of the possibility of a future Ebro transfer defended in the recent Valencian Statute of Autonomy 'irresponsibly pacted by the PSOE and PP'.⁸⁹ The New Statute theme is continued in 2007 with commitment to full autonomy for 'our' history, territory,

⁸⁴ 2001 Manifiesto Día Nacional d'Aragón.

⁸⁵ 2002 Manifiesto Autogobierno = poder para que Aragón decida. Trasvase No.

⁸⁶ 2003 Manifiesto Pleno autogobierno sí, trasvase no.

⁸⁷ 2004 Manifiesto Día Nacional de Aragón.

⁸⁸ 2005 Manifiesto Nuevo Estatuto.

⁸⁹ 2006 Manifiesto Día Nacional de Aragón.

resources, infrastructures, society, heritage and languages. Water is mentioned in the form of transfers and other communities' claims to water from the Ebro in their own statutes.⁹⁰ The proposed mini-transfer to Barcelona predominates the 2008 manifesto with the title *No más mentiras, trasvase NO* (No more lies, no to transfer) which highlights the fact that once again the Aragonese have had to take to the street to oppose the proposed Ebro mini-transfer to Barcelona, defend the New Water Culture and demand respect for the dignity of their country.⁹¹ Finally, in 2009 the CHA expresses its commitment to maintain, protect and enrich Aragon's natural, historic, cultural and linguistic heritage and reject economic development proposals of speculative companies based on projects that exploit natural resources that are environmentally unsustainable.⁹²

How the Ebro is viewed in the interviews carried out

Leading figures of the CHA view the Ebro as part of the wider defence of territory and all that is contained therein; as defence of natural heritage more than purely as an economic asset. They see the problem as not only that central government, wish to take water from the Ebro but that this takes away Aragon's possibilities of development, which they do not detail, forcing outward migration. More than the defence of natural resources, it has to do with dignity and respect for natural resources.

According to Vicente de Vera, CHA's emergence twelve years after the main thrust of the 1974 water transfer issue, which had been paramount in the emergence of the PAR, meant that it was *política hecha* ('water under the bridge') and other issues were at the forefront of its thinking, therefore, it did not have the Ebro as a 'special flag'. He pointed out that it saw it almost as a 'thing' of the right, of the PAR, which had identified with it as an absolute flag of its policy. His aim for the party was not to create symbols, be it the Ebro or the *fueros*, as he intended not to look to the past but to the future.⁹³

⁹⁰ 2007 Manifiesto Día Nacional de Aragón.

⁹¹ 2008 Manifiesto No más mentiras, trasvase NO.

⁹² 2009 Manifiesto Día Nazional D'Aragón. Sí, somos Aragón.

⁹³ Interview with Eduardo Vicente de Vera.

For subsequent presidents the Ebro falls within three visions: ‘an environmental and sustainable vision’; ‘a modern vision’ and ‘a popular vision of development and future prosperity’. Lozano, like Fuster and Bernal who are all strongly inclined to environmental and New Water Culture perspectives of the well-being of the ecosystem as a whole, does not single out the river Ebro or the symbol Ebro but sees it within the defence of Aragon’s natural heritage as a whole.⁹⁴ Defence of the Ebro, she argues, does not form an explicit part of CHA ideology. Respect and dignity figure largely in her perceptions. She maintains that more than defence of natural resources it is a defence of the dignity of natural resources, it is necessary to respect the mountain area and the people of the mountains and the same applies to the river. The life of the Ebro or of any river or any natural resource is fundamental. By way of comparison her view of the PAR’s defence of the Ebro is that it is an economic defence of a product, of a basic element, water, which has to be used in the best way economically and for this it requires more reservoirs, more utilisation, to use what you have to the maximum. In contrast she argues from an ecological stance that for the CHA water is a fundamental element of life, not of economic life but of life for everything, the riverbanks, the animals, the river itself, nature and the surroundings, ‘the river has life, the river in itself is life, and it forms part of life. It is more than its utilisation by man; it is a defence of the river itself.’⁹⁵ She maintains that in general the defence of nature and ecology is more important to the Chunta than the PAR, arguing that the river does not matter to the PAR, only its use. These ecological arguments put forward by Lozano differ from the ‘father-like’ and regenerationist perceptions of an Ebro that gives life characteristic of the early nationalist movement and its agrarian orientated thinking in general from which the CHA took its name and its cause.

In her perception, CHA arguments against water transfer are not portrayed as a conflict with centralism, as is often the case in sub-state nationalisms, but rather as against the unsustainable abuse of the environment in other areas of Spain, particularly in the eastern Mediterranean area which leads to demands for water from the Ebro. ‘It’s not that the people of Valencia or Murcia are better or worse, we are not speaking of people but of the economic interests of firms in Alicante, Valencia,

⁹⁴ Interview with Azucena Lozano.

⁹⁵ Interview with Azucena Lozano.

Murcia'. As we have seen in Chapter 5 the Marxist arguments of the *aragonesista* left in the 1970s viewed transfer as a consequence of the capitalist system more than a conflict with centralism. The CHA have replaced the Marxist argument with an environmental one. Similarly, Fuster does not portray the transfer issue as a conflict with central government but as a clash between two models of water management, a sustainable model of development and one of uncontrolled urbanism in desertified areas. These perceptions run contrary to centre-periphery theories.⁹⁶ Another example of sub-state nationalism that does not focus on centre-periphery conflict is the Northern League in Italy which blames the south for poor development.

Fuster and Bernal both argue that the CHA views water and the Ebro in a new, modern, dynamic, progressive, environmental and scientific manner, the 'modern vision', as opposed to the out-dated and conservative way in which the PAR view it:

Chunta Aragonesista represents a modern vision, a dynamic vision, a vision that understands and makes its own respect for the environment, like a fundamental pillar and, above all, respect for the river itself, respect for the river and for the resource and for the whole water cycle...⁹⁷

For Bernal this does not conflict with the images of redemption of dry lands, and regenerationist views held by their predecessors at the beginning of the twentieth century. He argues that this was the twentieth century image and they are now in the twenty-first; that the CHA is the product of different times. Both Fuster and Bernal point out that the basic arguments that the CHA has used to defend its position in relation to water have been based on environmental convictions, defence of the principle of unity of the river basin, that is management on a basin-wide basis and defence of the European Water Framework Directive 2000. Such arguments are not based on nationalist tenets but could equally apply to any environmentally orientated party.

For Fuster the symbol Ebro is an integral part of the popular imagination as opposed to that of the CHA. In the popular imagination 'it is a symbol of Aragon's resources, life-course and has a meaning of past present and future. It is the guarantor of wealth,

⁹⁶ See for instance of Nairn and Hechter, *Internal Colonialism*.

⁹⁷ Interview with Chesús Bernal.

resources, future investments, possibilities of development and future growth.’⁹⁸ He places its symbolism firmly in the realm of the collective subconscious, and a popular vision of development and future prosperity that at times has been excessively ‘mythified’ arguing that it has not been the CHA that has been at the forefront of this. He believes that this symbolism of what signifies wealth has impregnated the popular subconscious and, as a result, the largest demonstrations that have occurred have been in defence of the Ebro in the face of the threat of water transfers. His argument is somewhat contradictory as on the one hand he views it as a symbol of ‘our’ resources and ‘our’ life-course implying that this also applies to the CHA and on the other places it in the realm of the ‘collective subconscious’ rather than that of the CHA.

Like Vicente de Vera, Fuster does not consider that the CHA has taken on board symbols such as the Ebro or the Virgin of Pilar, certainly, as a lay party it does not get involved with religious symbols. It understands *el Pilar* as a cultural, festive and anthropological phenomenon or tradition. When asked what are the symbols of CHA, he answered by referring to its four identity traits. These, he argues, are the fundamental aspects and foundational axes on which it was set up twenty years ago, along with the earlier tradition of the Union Aragonesista from which it took its name. The first is defence of territory and defence of sustainable, balanced development to preserve the territory for future generations. The CHA’s view of balanced development, as we have seen, is based on improvement of existing irrigation systems as opposed to the introduction of any new ones that have high socio-environmental costs. Closely associated with this is the defence of areas of Aragon which have been affected by the construction of public works such as large dams and reservoirs. The second identity trait is rational water policy and the defence of a scarce resource from the scientific parameters of sustainability and support for ecological agencies and associations set up by people affected by large reservoir works and water regulation works. The third is its defence of Aragon’s historical, cultural and linguistic identity. That is to say, recognition that Aragon is a country with more than 200,000 years of history, with its own name and own institutions which are 1,200 years old. Fuster argues that Aragon was like an independent state

⁹⁸ Interview with Bizén Fuster.

with its own institutions. This refers to the historic Crown of Aragon which was a dynastic union under the King of Aragon which at its height in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was one of the major powers in Europe controlling a large part of present-day eastern Spain, comprised of the Condado of Barcelona, the Kingdoms of Valencia and Majorca, part of south western France as well as major islands and mainland possessions in the Mediterranean stretching as far as Greece and including Naples and Sicily. The Crown of Aragon had its own institutions, its Cortes, Diputación del Reino and Foral Laws. This is an example of the importance which the CHA places on Aragonese history as an identity trait as opposed to its geography and natural features. The Aragonese, he argues, are proud of their tradition, history, self-discovery as a community, of their future as a people, as a collective identity and this is an identity trait and as a nationalist party the CHA is obliged to defend it. The fourth identity trait is its obligation to defend examples of Aragonese culture as part of Aragon's heritage. For example, its Mudéjar art which has world heritage status and other works in Romanesque, Gothic and all of the artistic styles. This enormous cultural heritage is part of a territory that has had Roman, Iberian and Arabic influences and the cultural coexistence of Jews, Christians and Muslims. The CHA, he argues, has an obligation to transmit, respect, know, defend, love and protect Aragon's rich cultural heritage. In addition, there are two other aspects peculiar to Aragon: foral law and the tri-lingual character of the territory.

Whilst Bernal does not regard popular symbols such as the Ebro or the Virgin of Pilar as symbols of the CHA, but rather symbols of the PAR and the agrarian right, he does, however, see the Ebro as a symbol of struggle although it is not always clear whether the latter relates to the CHA or the popular imagination. In defining what the Ebro means for the CHA he states that, on the one hand, it is a formula or a reference of their way of understanding water policy in order to defend the European principle, the European Water Framework Directive and the unity of the river basin. From this perspective it is a model of cooperation between communities along its banks. On the other hand, the Ebro is a symbol of struggle. It is symbol of defence of territory in the face of threats such as water transfer, nuclear power installations on the Ebro, the construction of dams and reservoirs and the use of Aragonese land for artillery ranges and military installations, all of which cause disruption to the territory and displace its population. He argues that all of these things have made the Ebro a

symbol. It is not just one government that has done these things but several: Franco, the UDC, the PSOE and then the PP. He is of the opinion that all governments have tried to obtain more votes in the south using the Ebro as *la moneda de cambio* (bargaining tool) and as a consequence this has made it a 'totem' for the Aragonese. The argument that it is a symbol because of external rather than internal forces is a point also made by Fatás.⁹⁹ Thus, Bernal argues that in modern terms, on the one hand, it is part of the environmental management of water resources and, on the other hand, in the collective sub-consciousness it is a symbol, partly a myth, of the defence of territory and heritage.

There is a degree of ambiguity between the CHA wishing to avoid symbols and a desire by some members to have Aragon's history and figures of historical *aragonesismo* as symbols. For Bernal, the 'symbols' of the Chunta are firstly, Aragon's history. He argues that it has more than 1000 years of history and has made important contributions to Europe and the world. Secondly, there is Aragonese law and the defence of Aragonese rights and liberties which have been permanently under threat. Thirdly, there is cultural heritage, languages, institutions and monuments, especially Romanesque and Mudejar. He argues that defence of these things meant that the first federalist movements appeared in Aragon from the nineteenth century. During the Second Republic, Aragon put forward a Statute of Autonomy and after the death of Franco was one of the first communities to fight for autonomy and democracy being fourth to obtain pre-autonomous status after Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia and from then on it has articulated an *aragonesista* discourse. He argues that this progressive *aragonesista* discourse began with Calvo Alfaro and Gaspar Torrente and then Chunta. Thus, the Chunta regards the early movement and figures such as Torrente and Calvo Alfaro in a symbolic way and believes it is the heir to the earlier movement which it regards as a point of reference. Many aspects have been superseded with the passage of time but the CHA still regards them as symbols. Although the CHA has always paid tribute to Juan de Lanuza each year on 20 December, none of those interviewed mentioned him as a symbol, only Vicente de Vera thought that he may be a symbol of the CHA, although he himself is no longer part of it.

⁹⁹ Interview with Guillermo Fatás.

Thus, the ‘symbols’ or identity traits of the CHA, are not necessarily synonymous with those generally held to be characteristic of Aragon, the territory it represents, namely the Virgin of Pilar and the Ebro. The CHA recognises the Ebro as one of Aragon’s symbols of identity but does not take it as its own:

Attacks and threats to the Ebro are understood by the Aragonese society as a whole as threats and attacks on the whole of Aragon and evidently in this way the Ebro becomes one of the symbols of identity, one of the Aragonese identity traits, not to the point of identifying Aragon with the Ebro but for understanding that the Ebro has a very special symbolic value and a special political value in general for all Aragonese...

The Ebro is a catalysing instrument, an instrument around which different sensibilities converge. Not everyone has the same respect, the same consideration of the Ebro but in general we could say that if we asked the Aragonese to tell us which were the four or five identity traits without doubt all or the vast majority would say the Ebro is one of these.¹⁰⁰

Interestingly, in the CHA’s most recent exposition of what it considers to be symbols of Aragon’s identity, set out in *Charremos* to mark the Día de Aragón/Día de San Jorge celebrations 2009, there is no mention of the Ebro. The main ‘symbols’ listed are Aragon’s rights and liberties, which include its Foral Laws and its institutions. In addition, the dragon, the 23 April, Día Nacional de Aragón and fiesta of their patron San Jorge, the 20 December, anniversary of the execution of Juan de Lanuza, the *señal* of the Kingdom of Aragon and the shield of Aragon are all listed as symbols.

How the CHA is perceived to view the Ebro by others interviewed

The CHA’s position is seen as utopian by its territorial counterparts who argue that Aragon’s irrigated areas can not be extended without there being more resources, increased availability of water and more reservoirs which runs counter to its hydrological vision on dam and reservoir construction.¹⁰¹ The IU points out that from a nationalist view point, it is difficult to reconcile the fact that the Ebro flows through

¹⁰⁰ Interview with Bizén Fuster.

¹⁰¹ Interview with Alfredo Cajal.

nine other autonomous communities.¹⁰² However, it could be argued that the CHA has circumvented this by its insistence on sustainability and the unity of the river basin.

A number of intellectuals and nationalist historians close to the CHA perceive it as placing greater symbolic importance on the Ebro, and on symbols in general, than the party leadership and documents do. Peiró, for instance, is of the opinion that the Ebro would be one of the symbols of the CHA along with the flag and the 'hymn' *Canto a la libertad*.¹⁰³ Is this difference in perception a sign that commentators expect the CHA to put more emphasis on the Ebro than it does or that the CHA gives the impression of doing so although saying otherwise? It is true to say that whilst not regarding the Ebro as a symbol it is in the background of CHA photographs of its members objecting to water transfer. Fernández Clemente is of the opinion that for left-wing progressives such as the CHA the Ebro is important as a symbol of unity, strength and future and also as a symbol of identity pointing out, however, it was more important thirty years ago than it is now. Today, it is thought to be one of the many values that Aragon has but is no longer necessary or essential as an element of cohesion.¹⁰⁴ He considers the symbols of today's *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism to be territory, landscape, geography (for example arid zones and mountain zones), art, in particular Mudéjar which is specific to Aragon, artists such as Goya, Aragon's languages, literature and, in some instances, folklore, customs and a love of what is theirs. In this scenario he maintains that the Ebro would be one of the elements along with all of the others. He does, however, concede that 'the Ebro is territory, landscape, wealth, history and culture in the customs that come from the river.'¹⁰⁵ Borrás is of the opinion that the symbols of the *aragonesismos* of the right and the left are very different, with the Ebro being the patrimony of the PAR. He does not specify what the symbols of the left are.¹⁰⁶ However, the idea of having symbols at all is something the CHA party leadership past and present tend to deny.

¹⁰² Interview with Adolfo Barrena, 21 February 2007, Zaragoza.

¹⁰³ Following the death of José Antonio Labordeta efforts are underway by REA and CHA amongst others to have *Canto a la libertad* recognized as Aragon's official hymn.

¹⁰⁴ Interview with Eloy Fernández Clemente.

¹⁰⁵ Interview with Eloy Fernández Clemente.

¹⁰⁶ Interview with Gonzalo Borrás.

How the Ebro is viewed by state parties

The major difference between the hydrological policies and visions of the Aragonese territorial parties, CHA and PAR, and state parties is they are directed primarily at Aragonese interests whereas the state parties have a vision for the whole of Spain. However, on a local level the policies of the territorial parties and their ideological counterparts in the state system have much in common. The PAR is in favour of large-scale hydrological works to facilitate increased agricultural land. Similarly, the PP argues that its position in Aragon has always been to have the hydrological works that have been pending for the last hundred years. This it argues will increase agricultural productivity and allow people to remain in their villages.¹⁰⁷ Like the PAR, the PP maintains that only after these works have been carried out would it be possible to talk about whether there are surpluses and what to do with this water. Paradoxically, when the PP was in government in Spain it favoured transfer of water from the Ebro as set out in its PHN 2000 and at this time was willing to invest in hydrological works in Aragon which would have facilitated both transfer and infrastructure that the Aragonese had been calling for. However, with the shelving of the PHN 2000 by its PSOE successors, which would appear beneficial for Aragon as the threat of transfer was removed, the PSOE government also shelved the hydrological works needed for Aragon to make use of the water it has. Ironically, however, when the PSOE was in power nationally in the 1990s and proposed to transfer water from the Ebro in its PHN 1993 the PP was opposed to this. Such are the vicissitudes of politics. Whilst accepting that on a state-wide level the PP has an obligation to give water to those who require it and that its model of a PHN took this into account together with the works needed in Aragon as set out in the 1992 Pacto del Agua the President of the PP in Aragon, Gustavo Alcalde, argues, ‘if we share water as Spaniards we must first put into operation irrigation in the communities through which it flows as well as attend to industrial use and the quality of public water supplies’: an argument not too different from that of the PAR.¹⁰⁸

Alcalde maintains that for the Aragonese the Ebro is more than a resource and more than a river. It is a sentiment, a way of viewing the present and the future and a

¹⁰⁷ Interview with Guatavo Alcalde.

¹⁰⁸ Interview with Gustavo Alcalde.

symbol along with the Virgin of Pilar. He links this with the problem of emigration and rural depopulation arguing that the word 'transfer' is taboo because many Aragonese have had to emigrate to other cities because land without irrigation was not profitable or productive. Consequently, this has created a feeling in the popular imagination that water is fundamental and had it been available to their fathers and grandfathers they would not have had to leave their villages. He maintains that because of this the word 'transfer' has stirred up a phenomenon of collective rejection. When asked if the PP in Aragon had any symbols he replied that it shares the same symbols as the population in general. This was a more 'nationalistic' response than that of the CHA which did not necessarily share the same symbols as the people of Aragon in general.

Like their left-wing ideological counterparts the CHA, the PSOE currently bases its opposition to transfer of water from the Ebro in environmental and ecological reasons as summed up in the European Water Framework Directive dedicated to the principle of unity of the river basin arguing that they are against altering the course of the river as this is contrary to nature.¹⁰⁹ Having previously favoured large-scale water transfer on a state-wide level, as set out in their PHN 1993, the PSOE now believes that the water deficit in the Eastern Mediterranean regions of Spain can be resolved by desalination. The Secretary General of the PSOE's Parliamentary Group, Ramón Tejedor, argues that the PSOE and the PAR with which it is currently in coalition share the same thesis on hydrological matters, whilst admitting that in the past there were differences when it was more inclined to consider water transfers between river basins but that in line with scientific and technological advances it has turned to other alternatives. It would appear, however, that the PSOE's water policy is now more akin to that of the CHA especially on ecological aspects. The main point of divergence from their territorial ideological counterparts the CHA, Tejedor points out, is that like the PP the PSOE has a vision for the whole of Spain and, therefore, does not have a localist vision.

Like all of the Aragonese political parties, with the exception of the IU, the PSOE acknowledges that the Ebro forms part of the Aragonese sub-consciousness and is an

¹⁰⁹ Interview with Ramón Tejedor.

icon, an emblem and the principal identity trait of Aragon, 'it is not possible to speak of Aragon without speaking of the Ebro'. It is seen as fundamental for the development of the community bearing in mind that Aragon has a competitive agriculture that requires irrigation and the storage of water from the rivers that flow into the Ebro. Tejedor describes the Ebro as an emblem that unites the Aragonese against transfer and sees the Ebro, the Virgin of Pilar, the mountains as the most representative symbols of Aragon. Whilst there is unanimous recognition of the importance of the Ebro in the popular imagination by state and territorial parties it is surprising that the present-day territorial parties have not taken up its symbolism to a greater extent.

Finally, the IU is the least territorial in its attitude to the Ebro arguing that it passes through nine autonomous communities and that water belongs to everyone. However, it is not in favour of its use to promote development in already developed areas. It bases its views in a belief of solidarity between territories and like the other Aragonese left-wing parties takes a strongly environmental stance towards water and defence of the Delta del Ebro.¹¹⁰ It has embraced the Ebro in the least symbolic way viewing it as part of the natural environment and as an important historical, economic and social component of Aragon. The IU argues that what impregnates the subject of water is not nationalism but the fact that water is at the service of a development model and that the PAR and CHA have used the '*aragonesista* component' solely to defend water so that it remains in Aragon rather than out of a true nationalistic attitude towards it. The IU's Coordinator General, Adolfo Barrena, argues that the Ebro is a referent of the rural world rather than of the people of the city and that Aragon's mixture of cultures, its mountains, religion or culture are more of a referent than the river.

Whilst opposition to the transfer of water has always been fundamental to the PP and PSOE parties in Aragon, when their parties have been in power nationally their executives have believed that water transfer between river basins could provide the solution to Spain's hydrological problems which has led to a loss of votes for their party in Aragon with each failing to hold power following the launch of their PHNs.

¹¹⁰ Interview with Adolfo Barrena.

This fuels arguments used by the territorial parties that it makes little sense to vote for state parties that favour the transfer of water from the Ebro. All of the Aragonese parties except the IU believe that water favours development, agricultural development, urban development, the Expo, skiing, although their priorities on these differ.

Conclusions

The CHA's views on the Ebro are conditioned by its socialist, lay, New Left, progressive essence and its ideology in relation to ecology and defence of territory against projects that threaten it. Its nationalist element often appears to be superseded by its social democratic, New Left element. In this respect it is not unlike a number of other European sub-state, regionalist/nationalist parties. Its emphasis on history and cultural aspects such as architecture and previous cultures and the priorities of its 'spiritual' advisers and associative networks in these spheres as opposed to geography and landscape have influenced the low level of emphasis placed on the Ebro. It has inclined towards symbols such as Gaspar Torrente and the early nationalist movement rather than natural features of its territory. Moreover, its view is also conditioned by the belief that symbols such as the Ebro and the Virgin of Pilar are the preserve of the right, the agrarian sector and the PAR. The symbolic link between the Ebro and the Virgin of Pilar also appears to be a stumbling block for a lay party.

Whilst describing itself as a nationalist party CHA places greater emphasis on socialism, environmentalism, and progressivism and does not take up nationalist tenets sufficiently with the result that it becomes more of an opposition of left-wing orientation with its nationalist message taking second place. This places it in the shadow of the state socialist party PSOE when it is in ascendancy or defending Aragon against water transfers and in the position of picking up a protest vote from socialist voters when the opposite is true, 'the CHA grows at the expense of the socialist electorate – ideologically and consciously socialist – it synchronises this credo with nationalism of an *aragonesista* character'.¹¹¹ However, the weight often

¹¹¹ Jesús Sebastián Lorente, 'Réquiem por el aragonesismo político', *Siete de Aragón*, No. 68, 30 June-6 July 1995, p. 10-11.

appears to fall more on socialism and environmentalism as opposed to nationalism and a more nationalistic association with popular symbols such as the Ebro.

The CHA strongly identifies with environmentalism and its opposition to the transfer of water from the Ebro has increasingly become based on this aspect rather than in the romantic symbolism ascribed to the river by the early nationalist formation or the *aragonesista* centre-right's identification with powerful popular symbols such as the Ebro and the Virgin of Pilar. This is not to say that the symbolism of the Ebro has not been harnessed and utilised by the CHA at the height of the controversies surrounding proposed water transfers and in rallying and mobilising popular opposition in the form of mass demonstrations. However, in *Aragón Libre* and statements relating to water policy and water transfer there is increasingly an appeal to a form of environmental nationalism as opposed to the more sentimental symbolism of the Ebro as a father figure and life-giver.

The CHA's has focussed on environmental and socio-economic costs, grievance and loss of opportunities associated with water transfer from the Ebro but has not developed the ethno-symbolic aspects of the Ebro as an important part of Aragon's identity, symbolic memory or landscape iconography which, in the popular imagination it is regarded as representing. Rather CHA it has chosen to argue in terms of regional imbalance and inequalities, defence of territory and exploitation of resources focusing on socio-environmental damage/degradation of its territory. Chapter 8 will examine factors that have prevented greater symbolic development of the Ebro by *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism.

CHAPTER 8 CONCLUSIONS: HAS THE EBRO BEEN USED TO ITS FULL SYMBOLIC POTENTIAL?

'Water is irrigation.

*The three irrigation schemes do not depend
on the Ebro but on the rivers of the Pyrenees.*

The Ebro is a reference.¹

As the earlier chapters have shown the Ebro has played a constant, although varying role in *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism as a father figure, a symbol of homeland, a life-sustaining force, a referent of identity and cohesion, a symbol of patrimonial wealth, future prosperity and economic development and more recently as part of an ecological and environmental vision of Aragon's natural heritage. Moreover, in the period from the mid-1970s to the present day it has become a symbol of grievance and injustice as a result of successive attempts by central government to transfer water from the Ebro to the Mediterranean regions of Spain. However, despite its patriarchal, historical, territorial, symbolic and economic importance, the question remains as to whether it has reached its full potential as a symbol of Aragon, *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism. The first part of the chapter provides a comparative analysis of the changes in the way in which the Ebro has been used and viewed in the three pivotal stages of *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism – its inception, resurgence and the contemporary period. The second part analyses factors that have detracted from it reaching a greater level of iconic status in contemporary political *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism. It then considers various contradictions in the way it is perceived. Overall conclusions form the final section of the chapter.

At its inception, early twentieth century *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism, especially in its early days, viewed the Ebro in a Romantic, paternalistic, primordial way as a father-figure, life-giver, blood and veins of Aragon, father of the Aragonese ethnicity and nationality, a central element of homeland and a physical link with it. It was seen as an important element of ethno-symbolic myths, symbols, history and

¹ Interview with Lorenzo Lascorz, 20 February 2007, Zaragoza.

collective memory. It was linked with other important symbols of Aragon, the Virgin of Pilar, Costa and Aragon's history and institutions. Following the influences of *costismo* and regenerationism it was also seen in a quasi-religious and economic sense as 'redemption' through increased irrigation. Irrigation and water policy were key elements in the *aragonesismo* of the early twentieth century. A high degree of hope was placed on the Ebro's potential for future development. It was viewed as the central element of regional development and an emerging sense of economic nationalism. Irrigation, based on a model of state-funded hydrological works to create more irrigated agricultural land, canalisation of the Ebro and economic development based primarily in agriculture played a vital part in their *aragonesismo*. The disadvantage of dependence on the state and its resources to finance large-scale schemes such as these is that in times of instability and successive regime changes a sense of grievance is created when previously approved plans are not carried out.

However, whilst the Ebro occupied a central position in the thinking of the early group and reference to it remained constant in their magazine *El Ebro* figures such as Costa, Lanuza and Goya took on the role of protagonists because of the prestige they afforded and in the case of Costa because of the importance placed on his ideas on water policy and irrigation. Also, in the mid-1930s the Ebro lost some of its pre-eminence as issues such as a Statute of Autonomy, the formation of a nationalist political party, Estado Aragonés and the increasing predominance of Gaspar Torrente, who spearheaded these activities, came to the forefront. In the earlier period Calvo Alfaro had played a significant part in promulgating the paternalistic symbolic nature of the Ebro.

The image of the Ebro put forward by the early *aragonesistas* was more akin to that of the *aragonesismo* of the regionalist, centre-right PAR that emerged in the late 1970s which also saw it as life, hope and increased irrigation than that of the CHA. However, the PAR did not attempt to identify with this earlier tradition choosing instead the regionalist Miguel Sancho Izquierda as its honorary president. Although set up first, which would have allowed it to develop a symbolic link with the early *aragonesista* group, in the period immediately after the death of Franco little was known about this group, which may have contributed to the PAR not attempting to create links with this earlier *aragonesismo*. Moreover, at this time the PAR was

strongly regionalist and would not have identified with the more nationalist and Republican theorising of the earlier group. In its magazine *Alcorze* there is no mention of Calvo Alfaro and Gaspar Torrente until the 1990s, when the PAR took up a more nationalist stance. By this time, however, links with these figures had already been established by the *aragonesista* left. It was the CHA that took the name of the earlier group and attempted to link with its tradition and theorising although not sharing its symbolic elevation of the Ebro or its views on water regulation and irrigation.

In the period from the end of the Franco dictatorship and the re-emergence of territorial and regionalist associations which embarked on campaigns to reawaken a sense of Aragonese consciousness after the long period of repression, the earlier Romantic and sentimental perceptions of the Ebro were replaced by a defensive and reactive attitude towards it and the defence of water in the face of the proposal put forward in 1973 to transfer water from the Ebro to Barcelona for industrial and domestic uses. This shifted the emphasis from the earlier symbolic, life-giving, redeeming, hope for the future perception of the Ebro to a defensive perception based on grievance, injustice, lack of respect, regional inequalities and curtailment of future economic development. Moreover, the emergence of two distinct branches of *aragonesismo* led to different perceptions of the Ebro, appearing to come together at times when the threat of transfer was high but having very different 'hydraulic visions' and perceptions of the symbolic importance of the Ebro. In addition, the ways in which different sections of *aragonesismo* viewed the Ebro and the symbolic importance they assigned to it were conditioned by a number of factors, contradictions and ambiguities with the result that there is not one uniform perception of the Ebro in *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism. Where there is agreement is the perception of it as having great symbolic importance in the collective imagination but at the same time not adopting it as a specific symbol of the *aragonesista* group or party concerned.

The perceptions of the Ebro and water of the *aragonesismos* that emerged in the 1970s and 1980s were largely a response to the water policies of the Franco era and the proposal to transfer water from the Ebro in 1974. In the 1970s the left-wing's response was combined with the influence of a Marxist perspective on internal

colonialism and uneven development and the centre-right's with a regionalist and agrarian perspective and a view of economic development based on the ideology of regenerationism and increased irrigated agricultural land. However, both left and centre-right shared a common goal of raising awareness of the problems faced by Aragon as a result of state water policy and opposition to the Ebro-Pirineo Oriental transfer proposal. Also, both encouraged identity formation through grievance over the exploitation of Aragon's resources, in particular water, and the development of a defence of territory and 'what is ours' discourse. A response to the socio-ecological effects of Franco era water policies would form an important part of the *aragonesismo* of the left-wing nationalist party CHA that emerged later in the 1980s.

The *aragonesismo* of the CHA and the PAR has focussed on either economic, environmental, socio-economic costs, grievance and loss of opportunities associated with water transfer from the Ebro but has not significantly developed the ethno-symbolic value of the Ebro as an important part of Aragon's identity, symbolic memory or landscape iconography which they regard it as representing in the popular imagination. Rather the *aragonesista* positions put forward by these parties have chosen to argue in terms of regional imbalance and inequalities, exploitation and in the case of the CHA socio-environmental damage and degradation of their territory, this environmental aspect clearly stemming from the CHA's association with ecological and environmental tenets and groups.

The *aragonesista* centre right is characterised by its defence of water against transfer and demands for the completion or implementation of promised state-financed infrastructures to facilitate the introduction of further irrigated agricultural land in Aragon and improved communications networks. In the post-Franco period symbols such as the Ebro, together with el Pilar and the *jota* have been associated more with the *aragonesismo* of the centre-right PAR than with that of the left and the CHA.² The PAR has a perception of the Ebro and water as life, the implication falling on its economic aspect although more recently a degree of emphasis has been placed on essential and primordial aspects. A prime example of the its view of the Ebro as a life force and economic development is Gómez de la Rocas' statement 'for us the

² Guillén Pardos, *Aragón, comunidad imaginada*, p. 103.

Ebro is life and hope, at the same time it is a daily worry.’³ This hope was placed in its potential for future development and worry at the prospect of transfer before first seeing to Aragon’s needs. Its symbolic evocation of the Ebro is most evident in the context of the demonstration of the 23 April 1993 when Eiroa combined the ‘Father Ebro’ imagery and the symbolic location of the demonstration with an economic perception of it as a symbol of Aragon’s wealth and future.⁴

The *aragonesista* left is characterised by a historico-cultural discourse evident in REA and its magazine *Rolde* and works by left-wing intellectuals and an environmental discourse evident in the postulates of the nationalist party CHA. Unlike Welsh and Galician nationalism it was historians rather than geographers who were associated with Aragonese nationalism, hence the absence of a geographical discourse. Moreover, the left has avoided the development of symbols, the Ebro because of its perceived association with the PAR and the Virgin of Pilar because of its religious association. If it has any symbols they are Lanuza, Torrente, Aragonese history and institutions and the historical *aragonesismo* of the early twentieth century with which the CHA has been keen to link itself, although not with its romantic, sentimental and pro-irrigation views.

The differences between the two Aragonese territorial parties are considerable and while both are against the transfer of water and combine *aragonesismo* with the Ebro they are saying very different things. There are three different messages in relation to the Ebro and *aragonesismo*. Both sides say ‘no’ to water transfers, converge when there is a threat of transfer, but diverge when this threat passes. The PAR supports the Pacto del Agua along with the other Aragonese parties apart from CHA, arguing that when the works and irrigation schemes listed have been carried out if there is a surplus, which is unlikely, then this could be considered for transfer. For the CHA, however, the Pacto del Agua signifies constructing more reservoirs in the Pyrenees and storing water to send to the Mediterranean Arch regions. The PAR argues that it wants the water of the Ebro in order to have reservoirs, increased irrigated agriculture, self-manage it and if there is any water left over then others can have it. The CHA maintains it does not want more reservoirs, more hydraulic works, more

³ Gómez de las Rocas, *La autonomía*, pp. 252-3.

⁴ *El Periódico*, 29 March 1993. Cited in Guillén Pardos, *Aragón, comunidad imaginada*, p. 76.

flooded mountain valleys, it wants clean tributaries and for the Ebro Delta to be healthy arguing that water is not lost to the sea but brings nutrients to the Delta.⁵

Comparison of the use of the Ebro by Aragon's early nationalist group and present day *aragonesista* and nationalist parties show that today's parties have moved away from a sentimental, Romantic love of a natural symbol of their territory. The Ebro is still an evocative symbol, still causes an upsurge of patriotic/nationalist feeling and is still used in the process of raising Aragonese national consciousness and reinforcing its identity. However, it is not explicitly referred to in the literature of the CHA and PAR in the same way as it was in the early *aragonesista* press as demonstrated in Chapter 4. Present-day *aragonesismo* focuses more on economic, environmental and the socio-economic aspects and the loss of opportunity costs of water transfer. An exception to this is the PAR's focus on the essential aspects of the Ebro in the run-up to the Expo 2008. A further exception would appear to be the resurrection of the name *El Ebro* for the journal produced by the CHA sponsored Fundación Gaspar Torrente, however, the reason for this choice of name lies more in the link it provides between the early Unión Aragonesista and the present day Chunta Aragonesista than a sentimental evocation of the river Ebro.

There are a number of reasons for this change in emphasis. Firstly, the early nationalist formation was much more prolific in its writing, theorising and creation of myths and symbols. This can be compared with a lack of ideological analysis on the part of the present-day nationalist parties. The pamphlet *Aragón y el Estado*, 1996 is one of the CHA's few attempts at theorising. PAR have attempted a little more analysis in the form of Gomez de las Rocas, *La autonomía, a la vista*, 1978, and Eiroa's, *Razones y retos*, 1995. However, as its founders point out the ideology of the PAR is Aragon and the protection and promotion of Aragonese interests. Therefore, development of the symbolism of landscape and natural features of their territory is somewhat lacking or a reaction to outside appropriation of resources. In the period from the 1970s the importance of the Ebro and symbolism associated with it is more a reaction to the attempts of Central Government to transfer water from the Ebro than attempts by *aragonesista* and nationalist parties to develop it as a symbol of

⁵ Interview with José Luis Trasobares.

Aragonese nationalism. Furthermore, in the case of the CHA there has been a move from the earlier sentimental approach to the Ebro of its namesake the Unión Aragonésista of Barcelona to a new focus in keeping with modern trends such as environmentalism, federalism and Europeanism.

The CHA's nationalism is defined as the political proposal that defines and identifies it in the political spectrum. It is more political expediency than ideological. Ideologically the CHA is environmentalist and left-wing. It places greater emphasis on these aspects as opposed to nationalism and to a large extent becomes a green, left-wing opposition party as opposed to a traditional nationalist party. Nevertheless, the Ebro and water transfer controversies are readily utilised to raise nationalist issues and in nation-building. For instance, whilst the CHA does not associate with religious symbols it is willing, like most of Aragon's political parties, to use the gatherings that the Virgen de Pilar attracts to put across its political messages. It also utilise the sentimental impact of the Ebro with the Basilica del Pilar behind it in photographic images whilst professing not to have symbols and to have adopted a more modern nationalism. Both it and the PAR are willing to utilise the opportunities afforded by the controversy surrounding the Ebro and water transfer, such as press statements and interviews and speeches at anti-transfer demonstrations, to raise traditional nationalist issues such as territory, identity and 'what is ours'. In the case of the PAR its quest to obtain and consolidate power and its willingness to adopt strategic nationalism when opportune is evident. It has been dominated by the quest for the same level of autonomy for Aragon as the so-called 'historical nationalities', Catalonia, the Basque country and Galicia, as opposed to the theorisation and formulation of ideological tenets. With both parties political expediency dominates over ideological formulation, both being committed to the defence of Aragon's natural resources against exploitation or despoliation as opposed to specific ideological development of them as part of Aragon's identity and national landscape.

In the case of the nationalist party, CHA, in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries nationalist projects have to some extent fallen by the wayside in favour of internationalism and ecologism. This is perhaps a response to a quest for something different, more modern with the CHA being more empirical and anti-rhetoric than the more orthodox nationalist parties by offering a different, more modern form of

nationalism far removed from the Romantic, organic nationalism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and opening the way for a re-think. This does, however, raise the question of whether it is correct in making such a move or whether a 'nationalist' electorate still expect a nationalist party to display more overt nationalist tenets as opposed to a wider international ecological spirit. It is perhaps to the CHA's credit that it has taken an environmental stance towards the Ebro as opposed to a traditional nationalist stance towards patrimonial wealth and love of landscape features of territory. However, this shows an apparent clash with traditional nationalist thinking.

A number of factors have detracted from the Ebro reaching a greater level of iconic status in *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism. The first of the list of reasons why it has not been 'maximised', is the lack of homogeneity of the *aragonesista* discourse in the post-Franco period which has resulted in different perceptions and levels of importance being assigned to it by the *aragonesista* left and right. This has limited its development as an overall symbol of *aragonesismo*, with the left placing considerably less emphasis on it partly as a reaction to its perceived association with the right, partly as a consequence of their environmental and ecological tenets which focus on the environment as a whole rather than specific features; partly the result of the emphasis it places on historico-cultural aspects of its territory and, partly as a result of the failure of *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism in general to develop a geographical discourse centred on their territory and its natural features.

The early *aragonesista*/nationalist group centred in Barcelona had marked the launch of its main vehicle of expression by naming it *El Ebro* and paying tribute to the Ebro as the life-giver and father figure of its territory and nationality. This was highly understandable in an environment which was still predominantly rural and agricultural and in a situation in which it was separated from its homeland but still sufficiently close to a pre-eminent feature of it which presented a significant psychological link. However, whilst expressing a hope that *aragonesismo* would rise above left-right divisions this would not materialise in the post-Franco period due to the emergence of two *aragonesismos*.

The second reason is that whilst post-Franco nationalist and *aragonesista* discourses have on occasions made use of the Ebro's symbolism, and its power to stir up popular emotion, they have more frequently focused their grievances and hopes for the future more generally on 'water'. As a number of those interviewed argue, when the Aragonese speak of the Ebro they are speaking of the whole basin, of all of the rivers that flow into it or of water in general. This interchangeableness diminishes the symbolic focus on the Ebro. This is also demonstrated in institutional and governmental propaganda such as the slogans *Agua y autonomía* and *Aragón, agua y futuro* and in political speeches and publications by the *aragonesista* political formations. The use of the term 'water' does not evoke the same level of symbolism as the use of 'the Ebro'. Similarly, the use of the term *trasmase* rather than *trasmase del Ebro* also diminishes the symbolic evocation of this river. Such actions have detracted from the Ebro reaching its full symbolic potential.

There are a number of explanations for the use of the more general term water (*agua*) that go much deeper than the appeal of the *Aragón, agua* and *autonomía* alliteration. Firstly, whilst the Ebro is the pre-eminent river in Aragon in terms of size, centrality and its role as the collection point for waters from the Pyrenees to the north and the *Sistema Ibérico* to the south, Aragon consequently has an abundance of other rivers. In the words of La Ronda de Boltaña's song *La tronada*, 'we are a people of water in a dry country; we wish to live embraced by a river'.⁶ The river referred to could be any one of Aragon's rivers, of which fourteen are of significant size (See Appendix E). Admittedly, in the majority of cases their role is that of tributaries of the Ebro. These include the Ésera, flowing through Graus where Costa resided and to which he referred in his writings as 'the river that talks', the Cinca, the Gállego, the Hueva, the Jalón and the Arga and the Aragón from which the present territory and the ancient Kingdom acquired its name. It could therefore be argued that this abundance of rivers leads to either a focus on the river closest to which people live and with which they identify on a daily basis, or on the commodity water and its economic importance rather than the symbolism of any one particular river. Thus, a person who lives away from the Ebro, even though he may live near to a tributary, does not have the same affection, love or protective instinct towards the river. It can be argued,

⁶ La Ronda de Boltaña, *La tronada*, <http://www.fut.es/~ade?letras/tronada.htm>.

however, that attempts to transfer water from the Ebro, beginning in the time of Franco, did awaken a more widespread feeling that ‘they’ were going to take away something that is ‘ours’, a patrimonial resource, a referent of identity with the emphasis being placed more specifically on the symbolism of the Ebro as representative of the issue as a whole.⁷

Secondly, in interviews as well as written material there is a tendency when talking about the Ebro to suddenly shift to the use of the term water, as well as to use the term Ebro to refer to the whole river-basin as opposed to the river itself:

The Ebro is the abstraction of water. The Ebro is the Ebro, is the Gallego, is the Aragón, it is all of the rivers on the left-bank and some on the right bank. Water is the sum total.⁸

In Aragon to speak of the Ebro is to speak of water, one of the four mythical and primordial elements.

The Ebro is more than a river. It is the river and all of the rivers; it is the water and all of the waters of Aragon... And water in Aragon is life.⁹

The Ebro is a word, a name for the whole basin. It is a way of representing the whole basin of the Ebro.¹⁰

More than the river, I think it is the water, water and the idea of irrigation.¹¹

When we say Ebro we never mean to refer only to the river what we mean is the whole river basin.¹²

There is one step more, which is cultural and that is to identify this water in some way with the river. Frequently a way of speaking of water is to say the Ebro.¹³

This linking of the Ebro with the wider concept of water and the river basin as a whole detracts from the development of the more specific symbolism of one river.

⁷ Interview with Eloy Fernández Clemente.

⁸ Interview with Emilio Eiroa.

⁹ José Bada, *Prácticas simbólicas y vida cotidiana. (La identidad aragonesa en cuestión)*, (Zaragoza: Departamento de Educación y Cultura. D. L., 1995), p. 76.

¹⁰ Interview with Gaspar Mairal.

¹¹ Interview with Gaspar Mairal.

¹² Interview with Eloy Fernández Clemente.

¹³ Interview with José Luis Alonso, 26 October 2007, Zaragoza.

The wider concept of water is arguably less symbolic and more universal than the father figure personified by the Ebro in the writings of the early *aragonesistas*.

Thirdly, a further point that emerged from interviews is the existence of a variety of derivations associated with the Ebro and the necessity to differentiate between them. Several interviewees highlighted the need to distinguish between the River Ebro, the transfer of water from the Ebro, water in general and irrigation, pointing out that the latter two appear in the press all of the time; the river only on specific occasions. They also point out that there is a discourse on water and irrigation but not specifically on the Ebro.¹⁴ Not only is there an absence of a discourse on the Ebro but the promulgation in recent years of a notion that the people of Zaragoza had ‘turned their backs on the Ebro’, a statement which was made by a number of those interviewed and popularised in the press which does nothing to promote its national symbolism.

Fourthly, use of the term water, especially in the more recent period, has a more universal application and places *aragonesista* and Aragonese nationalist arguments in the wider context of world affairs and water conflicts. Internationally, in the late twentieth century, water became one of the most divisive environmental and political issues and one of the most politicised natural resources. Water related issues and their environmental implications are a widespread source of conflict. Thus, the use of the term ‘water’ internationalises the issue rather than confining it solely to the realm of Spanish interregional water disputes. This universal perspective is eminently reflected in the universal theme of Expo 2008, ‘Water and Sustainability’ and in statements such as the following, frequently made by the PAR’s Environment Minister Alfredo Boné, ‘without water no life is possible. It is a precious good, indispensable for all human activity’.¹⁵ In addition the European Water Framework Directive, which established an EU wide framework for water policy, is frequently used by both territorial and state parties in Aragon to support opposition to the transfer of water thereby seeking recourse to supra national legislation and support to validate their arguments.

¹⁴ Interviews with Gustavo Alcalde, Antonio Peiró, Eloy Fernández Clemente and Gaspar Mairal.

¹⁵ Alfredo Boné, Forward, *Funciones y usos*, p. 9.

A third reason why the Ebro has not been ‘maximised’ by *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism is its close link with Zaragoza. As a result it is associated with arguments that there is more to Aragon than Zaragoza and more to Aragonese identity than the lowland metropolitan modernity and Zaragoza’s imposing symbols, the Virgin of Pilar and the Ebro.¹⁶ Consequently, the use of the term water can be seen as more inclusive, especially for the mountain area of the Pyrenees and the southern part of the territory, than the Ebro. The association of the Ebro with Zaragoza and the lowland area of Aragon highlights the difficulty which *aragonesista*/nationalist elites and political formations encounter in finding one icon that can encompass the diversity of their territory in terms of both topography and divergent interests and aspirations. Aragonese territory lacks a homogenous ecology. Its diversity ranges from the alpine ecology of the Aragonese Pyrenees, to steppe areas around Teruel and semi-desert zones such as Monegros. A possible solution would be a logo incorporating mountains, river(s) and arid areas. Differing interests, especially in relation to water and proposals to increase the amount of lowland agricultural areas under irrigation, together with the concomitant flooding of upland valleys to facilitate the necessary water storage have resulted in a so-called lowland/mountain divide in which the question of water has had, on various occasions, a divisive rather than a unifying effect.¹⁷ The construction of reservoirs, and the resultant flooding and abandonment of upland villages, has created a feeling of grievance and undervalue on the part of the inhabitants of the mountain region. They argue that they have paid the price whilst the lowland area has reaped the benefits of successive water policies aimed at increasing irrigated agricultural land from the early part of the twentieth century. In such an atmosphere, the symbolism of the Ebro and Costa’s vision of ‘salvation as a result of water’ does not have the same resonance throughout the territory. To a large extent the PAR’s use of the outline of Aragon and the colours of the ancient House of Aragon and the CHA’s use of the letters of its name and the letter A of the name of the territory with the colours of the Aragonese flag below as their logos provides a solution to this diversity.

¹⁶ See Mairal, *La identidad*, p. 48 and Marcuello, *Señas de identidad*, p. 21.

¹⁷ The Fundación Ecología y Desarrollo has taken on a mediation role between the mountain and lowland regions. The CHA argues that the principles laid down by the New Water culture could be a useful tool for resolving mountain-lowland water conflicts, *Aragón Libre*, No. 53, Autumn 2004, p. 7.

A fourth factor that has hampered development of the Ebro as an icon of *aragonesismo* and Aragonese national identity is the existence of a rival iconography based on the harshness of Aragon's physical environment and the Aragonese people's constant struggle against it which has shifted the focus from the symbolism and 'life-giving' potential of the Ebro to the struggle against an unrelenting environment. This iconography, which Mairal refers to as a 'discourse of misery', is based on hardship and misery, and epitomised by abandoned villages, sterile drought-ravaged lands, emigration and the breakdown of traditional society.¹⁸ Originating at the beginning of the twentieth century, in a period characterised by considerable rural poverty and famine in Aragon and throughout Spain, it has formed an important part of the rhetoric of Aragonese irredentism, especially of the *aragonesista* left. It was prominent in the *aragonesismo* of the early decades of the twentieth century, in that of the PSA between 1975 and 1979 and, to lesser extent, was present in that of the CHA, although now showing signs of exhaustion.¹⁹ Mairal argues that attempts to maintain an Aragonese identity associated with irredentism, poverty and underdevelopment are out of line with current trends due to the process of renovation of rural life.²⁰ However, the image of hardship remains, along with the belief that had their fathers and grandfathers had sufficient water they would not have had to leave their villages and the idea of grievance and opportunity cost is therefore still current. The idea of hardship is eminently reflected in the songs of José Antonio Labordeta, in which there are ubiquitous references to emigration, land abandoned as a result of water scarcity and the hardships faced by those who work it (Appendix F). Although written largely in the 1970s and 1980s, and not completely anachronistic at that time of writing as there was still a good deal of hardship after the Franco period and villages without a supply of water other than the village pond, Labordeta's songs still have a high degree of emotional resonance especially when combined with anti-transfer demonstrations and occasions of high nation-building significance. Whilst the Ebro is clearly part of this discourse as a life-giving force

¹⁸ Mairal, *La identidad*, p. 83.

¹⁹ Mairal, *La identidad*, p. 55.

²⁰ Mairal, *La identidad*, p. 33.

and a source of regeneration and future development, the focus on the harsh environment clearly detracts from it achieving greater symbolic potential.²¹

A fifth reason why development of the Ebro as a 'master symbol' is hampered results from fluctuations in its level of symbolic and emotional importance. It clearly reaches its highest level of symbolism when it is under threat and the focus of mass public demonstrations and media attention. On a number of occasions throughout the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries it has come under threat as a result of Spanish central government proposals to transfer water from it to other regions of Spain. Originally conceived in the Pardo Plan Nacional de Obras Hidráulicas (1933), the idea of transferring water between river basins became an enduring aim of water plans of successive Spanish governments. Attempts in the 1970s, 1990s and 2000 to transfer water from the Ebro to regions outside its river basin, and *aragonesismo's* association of the defence of water with campaigns for increased autonomy, have, therefore, provided the impetus for upsurges in emotion in its defence and have resulted in an augmentation of its symbolic and unifying potential and power as a popular symbol in times of threat. For instance, the participation of people from all areas of Aragon, including the mountain area, in the anti-transfer demonstration on 8 October 2000 showed this issue's potential for unifying different interest groups in common defence of this symbol and resource.²² The importance of the Ebro as a symbol of grievance, injustice and central government victimisation is therefore greatly enhanced by the threat of water transfer. However, with the defeat of the PP government in 2004 and the shelving of its PHN the threat to the Ebro has once again receded. As a result, its potential for mobilising people and enabling them to 'come together in ways which seem directly to express the solidarity of the nation' has reduced.²³ In such circumstances the Ebro loses much of its high profile status and usefulness as a rallying symbol, crowd symbol and symbol of grievance.²⁴

²¹ The enigmatic line of Labordeta's song *Aragón*, 'Y donde hay agua una huerta' (Where there is water an orchard), provides a poignant illustration of how different the situation is if water is available and of agro-industry as part of a future vision of development.

²² 'Aragón rechaza el Plan Hidrológico con una manifestación masiva contra el trasvase del Ebro', *La Verdad*, 9 October 2000, <<http://www/la-verdad.com/pg001009/suscr/albac17.htm>> [accessed 31/10/00].

²³ Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*, p. 164.

²⁴ Although greatly diminished the threat of water transfer has not completely disappeared, as there is the probability that the proposal would be revived in the event of the return of a PP Spanish Government. In addition revised Catalan and Valencian Statutes of Autonomy approved in 2006 have attempted to keep alive their 'right' to transferred water from the Ebro.

A sixth factor that has detracted from the Ebro reaching a greater level of iconic status in *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism is competition from a number of other symbols. These include the Virgin of Pilar, Juan de Lanuza, Joaquín Costa, Aragon's history and its unique institutions and Foral Laws.²⁵ The hierarchy has varied according to the different postures, discourses and ideological stances of the 'players' involved. For instance, the early nationalist formation focused its attention and 'myths' on Joaquín Costa (1846-1911) with the *aragonesista* press of the period abounding with references to him.²⁶ As a leading figure of the Regeneration Movement, associate of the Institución Libre de Enseñanza, renowned historian, writer and free-thinker, Costa afforded prestige to the early *aragonesista* group and his hydrological and irrigation policies, conceptualised in Aragon, offered hope for Aragon's future. In the post-Franco period, conservative *aragonesismo* took the Ebro as its 'flag', although not its logo, and in the 1990s associated it with a symbolism in which the Virgin of Pilar represented 'the column or pillar of Aragon' and the Ebro 'the father and the future'. However, the academic discourse of *aragonesismo*, and that of the intellectuals of *Andalán*, accorded a high degree of importance to *la foralidad* and history, although not excluding identification with Costa and *costismo*.²⁷ The current left-wing nationalist party, CHA, has shifted the focus from the traditional symbols of its forbear UA, such as Costa and the Ebro, to the wider conceptual representations of environmentalism and the preservation of Aragonese natural and historical patrimony.²⁸ If any figure is singled out for mention in their literature it is the founding father of Aragonese nationalism, Gaspar Torrente. Finally, there is a fairly undeveloped symbol, San Juan de la Peña. Its lack of development by left-wing *aragonesismo* is most likely a result of its religious association and links with the PAR. Emilio Eiroa is *Hermano Mayor* of the Hermandad de los Caballeros de San Juan de la Peña, which has made considerable efforts to restore the monasteries of Santa Cruz de la Serós and the Monasterio Bajo

²⁵ Aragonese Institutions are its Cortes, Diputación General del Reino and Justicia. Its oldest *fueros*, which are Foral laws relating to historic rights dating back to the XI and XII centuries are *El Fuero de Jaca*, *Fueros de Sobrarbe*, *Fueros de 'extremadura'* and *Fuero de Zaragoza*.

²⁶ See for instance publications such as *El Ebro* (1917-36), *El Ideal de Aragón* (1930-1932) and *Renacimiento Aragonés* (1935-1936).

²⁷ *La foralidad* is based on a belief that Aragon is defined by its unique foral laws.

²⁸ The CHA, like the PAR, are committed to securing the return of Aragonese historical documents removed to other parts of Spain by the Franco regime.

and revive this national site which houses the remains of the first Aragonese kings, who belonged to the Pyrenean dynasty.

A seventh crucial factor that has prevented the Ebro from achieving greater prominence is the fact that it is viewed as a symbol that binds and is intertwined with other symbols, a metaphysical unifier, rather than a stand-alone symbol. Whilst on the one hand the Ebro's link with other symbols can appear to have a strengthening effect by pulling together powerful symbols of Aragon it also weakens it as a stand-alone symbol, presenting it as a metaphysical unifier or *aglutinador* (binding element). At the beginning of the twentieth century Costa, water policy and Aragonese economic development and 'rebirth' based on the Ebro were inextricably linked in the 'myths' of the early nationalist movement. Ironically, whilst, the movement's magazine, symbolically named *El Ebro*, carried the emblematic statement that the Ebro is the 'father of our nationality' on the front page of the first edition, it was, nevertheless, the figure of Costa that received most attention in the issues that followed. Ubiquitous reference to Costa was also characteristic of 1930s *aragonésista* magazines *Renacimiento Aragonés* and *El Ideal de Aragón*. Thus, the life-giving and patriarchal properties of the Ebro, whilst present, received much less attention. On many occasions when the Ebro was mentioned it was by means of the much-quoted words of Costa, 'the river Ebro as the cradle and centre of the Aragonese nationality and Spain's teacher on social matters' rather than in its own right.

In the post-Franco period, once again, the Ebro became interlinked with other important symbols of Aragon such as the Virgin of Pilar, San Jorge and with occasions of nation building significance, the Fiestas de Pilar and the Día de Aragón. The link, in this instance, was due to the fact that ceremonial occasions linked with these symbols were used for major demonstrations in opposition to water transfer from the Ebro. Such occasions are also characterised by the ubiquitous presence of other symbols of Aragon, its flag and the performance by Labordeta of emblematic semi-official hymns *Canto a la libertad* and *Aragón*. This interlinking of the Ebro with other symbols on the one hand has the effect of bringing these symbols together but on the other hand, has detracted from the Ebro being developed as a more potent symbol in its own right.

An eighth reason why the Ebro has not been further developed by *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism is that use of the Ebro and the popular sentiment it arouses no longer falls exclusively within the domain of Aragon's regionalist and nationalist parties as it did in the early part of the twentieth century. Its use by state parties steals much of its nationalist thunder and makes the message of these parties attractive to those who wish to promote Aragonese interests but would prefer to vote for a state wide party. The Ebro is therefore a double-edged sword when used as a party-political symbol and consequently cannot be utilised solely for nationalist purposes. The early regionalist/nationalist group was able to develop it as its own. However, in the modern Spanish State of Autonomous Regions state parties also promote the interests of their region and identify with its symbols and claim to have 'aragonesista roots' even when this comes into apparent conflict with the policies of their Federal Executive in Madrid.²⁹

Finally, when examining factors that may have detracted from the Ebro having greater prominence one must also consider whether the appropriation of Aragonese popular symbols by the Franco regime, such as the Ebro, along with the Virgin of Pilar and the *jota*, adversely affected its position as a symbol of Aragon, *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism. The Ebro as Spain's most voluminous, second longest and perhaps most highly emblematic river, having given its name to the whole Peninsula and been explicitly linked with Spanish history has also given it an important place in the folklore of Spanish patriotism and nationalism. However, since the end of the Franco dictatorship much has been done in Aragon to rebuild its national identity and rehabilitate, reconstruct, recast and resemanticise its symbols and history. Rehabilitation of Aragonese symbols began in the 1970s with campaigns to reawaken a sense of Aragonese consciousness after years of repression under Franco and over the course of the last thirty years opposition to the transfer of water from the Ebro has symbolically brought together *el Pilar* and the Ebro and recast them once more as symbols of Aragonese identity and future with considerable steps being taken by the Aragonese Government, particularly in the 1990s under the Presidency of Emilio Eiroa, and the press to *resemantizar* and *aragonizar* these

²⁹ 'Iglesias asegura que el Pacto del Agua es un "seguro a todo riesgo"...', *Europa Press*, 1 August 2000, <http://hisagua.cedex.es/bbdd/Noticias/Textos/ps010800aa.htm> (14/11/00).

symbols by creating a sense of community value and identity around them through popular demonstrations and press communications.³⁰ These steps included, first, the use of festive occasions associated with these symbols for demonstrations, second the use of an emblematic location alongside them and third, the use of political and media discourses to promote *el Pilar* and the Ebro as ‘pillars’ of Aragon’s future, fourth, the ubiquitous presence of the Aragonese flag on these occasions and fifth, the combination of all these things to reinforce the collective identity of the community. The choice of the Plaza de Pilar with the Ebro behind it as the location where the Aragonese people expressed their opposition to proposed transfers of water from the Ebro and their collective demands for increased autonomy served to reinforce the notion of an Aragonese collective imagination that identifies with *el Pilar* as the ‘column of Aragon’ and with the Ebro as the father and future of the community.³¹ As Breuilly contends symbols project an image of a nation and enable people to come together in ways that seem to express the solidarity of the nation.

In the same way as symbols of Aragon were used by others landscape features are not always unique to one particular nation or people but are shared with neighbours. Ownership by one community could therefore be contested. The Ebro with its source in Reinosa in Cantabria flows through nine regions before flowing into the sea. However, as Herb and Caplan point out claims to uniqueness tend to be supported by the introduction of other elements specific to a particular culture such as folklore, myths and local heroes.³² The Ebro is, therefore, linked with other symbols of Aragon, such as the Virgin of Pilar, and Costa, with Aragonese myths, legends and with traditions, history, popular culture, popular music and *jotas* thereby strengthening the claim to ‘ownership’. As one *jota* points out it is when the Ebro is a ‘mature’ river that it is linked to the image of Aragon and its capital city Zaragoza where a large proportion of the Aragonese population has always lived.³³ Also, there is popular avoidance of recognition that the Ebro is not solely Aragonese. How the Ebro is perceived in these other regions through which it passes would provide a topic for further research.

³⁰ Guillén Pardos, *Aragón comunidad imaginada*, pp. 32 and 75.

³¹ Emilio Eiroa, cited in Guillén Pardos, *Aragón comunidad imaginada*, pp. 76.

³² Herb, p. 18.

³³ ‘El Ebro nace en Fontibre, se hace macho en Aragón, y al pasar por Cataluña, se nos vuelve maricón.’

Contradictions and paradoxes

There are a number of contradictions and paradoxes in how the Ebro is viewed which also play a significant part in limiting the full development of its symbolic potential in *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism. The first is that whilst both camps of present-day political *aragonesismo* oppose transfer one is in favour of increased regulation, dams and reservoirs to increase irrigated land in Aragon whilst the other is opposed to more dams and reservoirs arguing that apart from the high social and environmental costs the works necessary for this would also facilitate the transfer of water to areas outside Aragon. It is paradoxical that in the same demonstrations against the transfer of water there are people who say no to reservoirs and people who say yes.

A second contradiction is the notion of the Ebro and water being regarded on the one hand as *lo nuestro* whilst on the other both territorial parties support of the concept of unity of the river basin. However, the fact that the Ebro passes through nine autonomous communities and could not be managed from nine territorial positions focusing on the interests of their own particular territory means that the only logical response is to manage it on the basis of the river basin as a whole even though this presents an apparent contradiction with the patrimonial tenets of territorial based ideologies such as *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism. Also, the environmental aspect of CHA ideology dictates an approach which upholds the tenets of unity of the river basin.

The contradiction between ‘ours’ and something shared with other communities in its river basin is also present in how the Ebro is perceived to be seen in the Aragonese collective imagination. As Gómez de las Rocas points out, whilst the Aragonese consider the Ebro as ‘theirs’ there is awareness that it is not exclusively theirs, ‘the Ebro is one of our mental fixations, but what is more an ‘illegal’ fixation’.³⁴ Fatás also refers to the view in the collective imagination, literature and songs that ‘the Ebro is ours but not only ours and we know it’.³⁵

³⁴ Interview with Hipólito Gómez de las Rocas.

³⁵ Interview with Guillermo Fatás.

A third contradiction is that whilst not selecting the Ebro as a specific symbol of their party, organisation or *aragonesismo* the majority of those interviewed were of the opinion that it is ‘everything’ for Aragon and an integral part of the life of the community and the popular imagination. There is a degree of incongruence between acknowledgement of the existence a popular perception of the Ebro (and *el Pilar*) as symbols of Aragon but at the same time not adopting it as one their own symbols for either ideological reasons, as a result of allocation of importance to other aspects such as history, Aragonese Foral Law or the Aragonese flag, or the desire to avoid creating symbols. This leads to the conclusion that popular symbols are not necessarily symbols of *aragonesista* and nationalist political and cultural formations. This is explained by Gómez de las Rocas in relation to his period in power in terms of symbols being seen as being part of a ‘regionalist identity card’ which he did not think prudent to use in Spain, and by the CHA as a general reluctance to have any kind of symbols and in particular rejection of religious symbols, such as *el Pilar* because of its essence as a lay party.³⁶

There is a contradiction between the perception of how the Ebro is viewed in the Aragonese popular imagination and the degree of importance given to it by *aragonesista* and Aragonese nationalist formations and political parties in the post-Franco period. The Ebro is seen by both *aragonesistas* and leading figures of Aragonese state parties to be regarded as an icon, an emblem and a symbol of identity in the Aragonese subconscious. Here it is viewed as a principal identity trait of Aragon to the point that it is considered that ‘it’s not possible to speak of Aragon without speaking of the Ebro’.³⁷ It is seen to represents the connection between the past and the present, between a tradition or a way of life and evolution as a people and it also projects to the future.³⁸ It is viewed as more than a resource and more than a river, as a sentiment and emotion and a way of ‘viewing the future with or without water’.³⁹ Gustavo Alcalde argues that the word ‘transfer’ is taboo. The reason being that thousands of Aragonese had to emigrate to other Spanish cities to make a living because the land without irrigation was not profitable or productive. Therefore, it is

³⁶ Interviews with Hipólito Gómez de las Rocas, Bizén Fuster and Chesús Bernal.

³⁷ Interviews with Ramón Tejedor and Hipólito Gómez de las Rocas.

³⁸ Interview with Bizén Fuster.

³⁹ Interview with Gustavo Alcalde.

argued, that in the popular imagination this has created a feeling that water is fundamental and if their fathers and grandfathers had had water they would not have had to leave their villages. This is why the word 'transfer' has created a phenomenon of collective rejection which from the 1970s has also become part of the political life of the community.⁴⁰ Interestingly, for the PP and the PAR the reason why people have been forced to emigrate is placed on the lack of irrigation and regulation of water whereas for the CHA it falls on the consequences of regulation, that is, the flooding of valleys for reservoirs and water regulation. The Ebro is also seen as an emblem that unites the Aragonese in a vindication against transfer.⁴¹ It is perceived as an elemental, primordial force, 'with the Ebro you do not have to explain anything'. As a result when there are proposals to take water from the Ebro the people take to the street en mass.⁴² It is seen the catalysing instrument around which different sensibilities converge. Whilst not everyone has the same respect or the same consideration for the Ebro the vast majority of the Aragonese would say the Ebro is one of Aragon's identity traits.⁴³ Finally, it is believed that there is a subconscious collective feeling that the Aragonese live in a desert climate where there is little rain and the only flow is the Ebro. Thus, it appears that if the Aragonese cede water from the Ebro, they give away their principal source of wealth. Initially this was related to agricultural wealth, then industrial, however, it is pointed out that this line of thinking is not solely the patrimony of a regionalist and nationalist ideology.⁴⁴

A fourth contradiction is that on the one hand the Ebro is perceived to be a mythical referent and a source of great sentimental attachment for the Aragonese and on the other hand there is the promulgation of a notion, particularly by the left, that the people of Zaragoza 'have turned their backs on the Ebro' and do not take care of it. The term *han vivido a espaldas al río* was used by many of those interviewed. It was suggested that this is because the Ebro has been simply a route way that separates one side of the city from the other and has not been an element of recreation and tourism. The hope was expressed that the Expo 2008 would have the benefit of

⁴⁰ Interview with Gustavo Alcalde.

⁴¹ Interview with Ramón Tejedor.

⁴² Interview with Eloy Fernández Clemente.

⁴³ Interview with Bizén Fuster.

⁴⁴ Interview with Gonzalo Borrás.

recuperating the Ebro for the city of Zaragoza and its citizens.⁴⁵ Another argument was that it is difficult to get down to the banks of the Ebro and that the city had not been built to integrate the river, and even the reconstruction works as a result of the Expo would only improve a limited area.⁴⁶ A further argument was that the Aragonese people defend their right to ownership of water and use of water without having much affection for the river. They defend it because it is their river not because they love it, only because it brings life. When they defend the river they are defending a function, a function of wealth, which brings water for drinking, for industry and for the future. Consequently, the river itself has had few defenders and the people of Zaragoza have ‘lived with their backs to it’.⁴⁷ It was also argued that people had turned their backs on the Ebro as a result of pollution and the construction of large-scale dams.⁴⁸ José Ramón Marcuello highlighted the close relationship between man and river throughout human history but at the same time argued that the Ebro has been ignored by those living close to it over the course of the last century. This was because the river had come to be viewed in a different way, as a source of hydroelectric energy and because it had been maltreated. The construction in the 1950s of the dams of Mequinenza and Ribarroja had interrupted the navigation of the river and the migration of fish, eels and sturgeon. Added to this, there had been progressive pollution due to industry and human activity. He contrasted the strong cast of the Ebro in the Aragonese collective consciousness and sub-consciousness with the real social and economic importance of the river in the community through which it flows and the time honoured difficulty of hydraulic utilisation, navigation, crossings and regulation together with the change of opinion towards it that occurred in times of the devastating floods.⁴⁹ This highlights the contradiction that in spite of the fact that the Ebro has a central place in the popular imagination, in literature, in *jotas* people have become accustomed to ‘living with their backs to the river’. A further view was that there was not the same culture of the river or a kind of intense interaction with it that exists in relation to the Loire or the Rhone where social activities take place on the river. There is a perception of the river Ebro as dirty, as a place where you can not swim, where one can scarcely row and where there is no

⁴⁵ Interview with Ramón Tejedor.

⁴⁶ Interview with Adolfo Barrena.

⁴⁷ Interview with Eloy Fernández Clemente.

⁴⁸ Interview with José Ramón Marcuello.

⁴⁹ Interview with José Ramón Marcuello.

fishing except for the Mequinenza reservoir, one interviewee concluding that river is almost dead and has no life.⁵⁰ Finally, there is the view that the river Ebro is one thing and the symbol Ebro is another. That is to say the river that passes through Zaragoza is not a popular symbol as the physical river separates the rich part of the town from the poor part. Thus, it is a symbol in an abstract sense rather than a physical and expressions such as *vivir de espaldas al río* (to live with ones back to the river) and ‘mirando al Ebro’ (looking towards the Ebro) refer to this abstract sense.⁵¹

Increased use of this expression *vivir de espaldas al río* by politicians, academics and the press in the run-up to the Expo 2008 probably owed much to attempts to justify proposals to provide additional river crossings and the improvement of riverside walkways as part of the project.⁵² The opposite of this term and one of the desired outcomes of Expo 2008 was that Zaragoza would look towards the river instead of turning its back on it. Another image topical in the run-up to the Expo 2008 was that of the Ebro as the ‘main street’ of the city.⁵³

A fifth contradiction arises between nationalistic sentimentality towards the Ebro and the scientific, academic approach to it which has gained ground in the post Franco period. At its II Asamblea Nacional the CHA advocated instructing its members ‘to convert what is, in many cases, sentimental nationalism into nationalism founded in scientific bases’.⁵⁴ Fatás also argued that post-Franco Aragonese society has gained greater levels of technical knowledge and there was considerable academic research on water related topics and an open society, which has greater knowledge of the natural environment, and focused on the problem in a much more intelligent and technical way than previously. Therefore, feelings surrounding the Ebro are no longer purely sentimental as it is necessary to take into consideration arguments associated with production costs, desalination costs and costs of depuration and

⁵⁰ Interview with Gaspar Mairal.

⁵¹ Interview with Azucena Lozano.

⁵² For instance in press interviews with the socialist mayor of Zaragoza, Juan Alberto Belloch and those involved with the forthcoming Expo 2008, the author of *El Ebro*, José Ramón Marcuello and a number of my interviews.

⁵³ This term was used by Eloy Fernández Clemente when interviewed and also in the press.

⁵⁴ II Asamblea Nazional, 1988, p. 23.

water recycling and it is this cost related discourse, which is neither ideological nor sentimental that raises the most political interest.

A sixth contradiction is that whilst the Ebro is seen as a powerful element or symbol of unity, especially when under threat, it can also be an element of conflict. Unity and division go hand in hand. Areas of potential conflict of interests arise in relation to the interests of mountain and lowland areas with popular movements opposing the construction of more dams and reservoirs versus demands for more irrigated agriculture; social costs versus development; environmentalism and the paradigm of sustainability versus development.

Overall conclusions

The thesis has shown that *aragonesista* and nationalist formations have embraced a variety of different uses and perceptions of the Ebro. Some have embraced it to a high degree and others to a lesser, these uses conforming to different conceptualisations of organic nationhood and national identity and different ideological orientations. It has revealed different interpretations of the importance of the Ebro in the three pivotal stages of *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism – its inception, resurgence and the contemporary period with the 1970s and 1980s interpretations, groups and intellectuals acting as a bridge to those of the present day.

It has shown that the existence within *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism of a number of different postures in relation to the Ebro, the transfer of water and its identification with different interest groups, such as agriculturalists or environmentalist which has the effect of limiting the projection of a common stance in relation to the Ebro and thereby detracting from it reaching the status of a ‘master symbol’ of *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism as a whole. Consequently, over the course of the last century it has been viewed in a number of different ways. Moreover, the existence of a two-pronged *aragonesismo* with different postures on water policy and the symbolism of the Ebro, together with the existence of other competing symbols and iconographies, fluctuations in its level of symbolic and emotional importance and the tendency of contemporary Aragonese nationalism to

avoid having symbols have all prevented it from achieving greater prominence in *aragonesista* and nationalist discourses.

The divide between *aragonesismo* of the centre-right and the left is problematic as by definition nationalism ought to be unitary and homogeneous if it is to succeed in creating a sense of common belief in a people with a shared past, common destiny and shared symbols. Homogeneity could be imposed if there is a will to do so. The PAR is nearer to this ideal, in 1987 describing itself as ‘committed to promoting everything Aragonese; renouncing or rising above right-left polarisation (which is only of interest to those who maintain it for electoral purposes), in order to attempt to solve the problems of the whole society of this territory, and interested in everything to do with Aragon.’⁵⁵ Referring to the necessity to enter into pacts the PAR noted, ‘the river of the PAR does not carry sufficient water and we are obliged to make meanders, on some occasions to the right and on others to the left’.⁵⁶ The *aragonesista* left, however, is firmly committed to a left-wing socialist ideology and does not appear willing to make such ‘meanders’.

Political expediency and in the case of the CHA left-wing and environmental tenets and a more modern perception of nationalism have predominated over ideological theorisation which may account for a lack of development of traditional nationalistic symbols of their territory and its patrimonial wealth. However, both the PAR and the CHA are willing to use the Ebro and water transfer controversies for nation-building purposes and to stir-up popular sentiments towards the Ebro but have not paid much attention to theorisation on Aragon’s natural resources and symbols such as the Ebro. It is the PAR and not the nationalist CHA that has taken up the Ebro to the greatest degree as its ‘flag’ and as the life and essence of Aragon. The CHA’s choice of a more modern form of nationalism based on ecologism, sustainability and scientific arguments is perhaps apt in the twenty-first century. However, it remains to be seen if this is what a ‘nationalist’ electorate are seeking and whether a more sentimental, romantic nationalistic approach to the natural elements of their territory still persists in the popular imagination. The CHA’s avoidance of symbols runs counter to the

⁵⁵ Pedro J. Lorenzana y Sanz, ‘Distinción entre regionalismo y nacionalismo’, *Alcorze*, No. 80, 1987, p. 12.

⁵⁶ Editorial, *Alcorze*, No. 92, May 1989, p. 2.

view of theorists of nations and nationalism such as Hobsbawm, Breuilly and Smith who argue that symbols are fundamental to nationalism. Also, the use of the more general term 'water', together with the *aragonesista* left's focus on history and *foralidad* and the CHA's identification with wider concepts of environmentalism and the preservation of Aragonese patrimony, of which the Ebro forms part but is not the symbolic figurehead, have further detracted from its symbolic pre-eminence.

Nevertheless, the Ebro has had a constant, although varying role in *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism. It has been viewed as part of an *aragonesista*/nationalist vision of future economic development, patrimonial wealth, environmental stewardship and protection of natural heritage and an integral part of regional inequalities issues, grievance and exploitation. In addition, it has become intertwined with other important symbols of Aragon such as the Virgin of Pilar and Costa and, as a result of its defence against outside encroachment in the form of water transfers has been linked with ceremonial occasions such as the Día de Aragón and the Fiestas de Pilar, which are of paramount importance in nation-building and the reinforcement of identity. Demonstrations against proposed water transfers have also served to link it with 'new' symbols such as the flag and popular music. All of these factors indicating that its defence against transfer goes beyond purely economic and environmental considerations and evokes deeper nationalistic aspects.

The international Exposition of 2008 on the banks of the Ebro offered an opportunity for symbolic promotion. As rivers are frequently viewed as symbols of a nation's progress, economic development and future prosperity it was a chance for *aragonesista* and nationalist parties to develop it further as a symbol of Aragonese progress and future and, as Brian Osborne postulated with regard to the St Lawrence, 'as a landscape appropriate for the modern national experience'.⁵⁷ The Expo 2008, however, came too late for an assessment of its impact to be made for the thesis but could form the basis for future research. The thesis opens up a number of other possible avenues of research. These include analysis of how it is viewed in the Aragonese popular imagination and collective subconscious, how it is represented in the press and also how it is viewed in the other autonomous regions through which it

⁵⁷ Osborne, 'A Canadian "Riverscape"', p. 275.

passes. In addition, there is considerable scope for further research on how the Aragonese territorial parties compare with other parties of this type in a wider European context.

The thesis has contributed to knowledge in three main areas. Firstly, to studies of *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism which to date have not specifically analysed the use of the Ebro by the different groups and political parties within it in different periods. In addition, it examines and compares the perspectives of both branches of present day *aragonesismo* which has not previously been attempted. There has been little analysis of the centre-right PAR with the exception of the two books written by its founders. It has shown that beneath a generalised view that Aragonese territorial parties are opposed to water transfer, defenders of the Ebro and view the Ebro is a central part of Aragonese identity, which is frequently perpetuated in the press, lie different reasons for their opposition to water transfer, different perceptions of the Ebro and two very different visions of hydrological and economic development, both incorporating the Ebro but not in the same way. Secondly, it contributes to understanding the deeper nationalistic aspects that underlie opposition to water transfer proposals put forward by Spanish central governments which see it in terms of defence of territory, patrimonial wealth, protection of natural national heritage, environmental stewardship, future development and prosperity, self-management of natural resources and on occasion identity, with considerable differences in how it is viewed by different groups within *aragonesismo* and Aragonese nationalism. Thirdly, it contributes to debates on sub-state nationalisms and the role of landscape and natural elements in national identity formation showing that as a result of other priorities in the post-Franco period namely a focus on grievance, exploitation and regional inequalities, the prioritising of other symbols, a focus on water in general, or in the case of the CHA, a focus on socialist as opposed to nationalist tenets and the wider aspects of environmentalism, landscape and specific natural elements of its territory such as the Ebro have not received the same level of ethno-symbolic and identity development as they received in the earlier part of the twentieth century. What remains to be seen is how the CHA will develop following its electoral setback in the Regional Elections of 2007 and recognition of the need to consider the weight it places on its socialist and nationalist components as well as the effects of the loss of its voice in Madrid in the General Elections in the

following year. Whilst a further water transfer controversy could be a blessing in disguise for utilisation of the Ebro as a vehicle to highlight *aragonesista* and nationalist issues and grievances it carries the ever present threat of 'mortgaging the future' by committing a large quantity of water for use elsewhere before attending to Aragon's development needs which lies at the core of *aragonesista* and nationalist opposition.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

LIST OF INTERVIEWS CARRIED OUT

1. ADOLFO BARRENA, 21 FEBRUARY 2007, ZARAGOZA
2. ALFREDO BONÉ Y ALFREDO CAJAL, 20 FEBRUARY 2007, ZARAGOZA
3. ANTONIO PEIRÓ ARROYO, 24 OCTOBER 2007, ZARAGOZA
4. AZUCENA LOZANO, 6 NOVEMBER 2008, HUESCA
5. BIZÉN FUSTER, 23 FEBRUARY 2007, ZARAGOZA
6. CHESÚS BERNAL, 23 FEBRUARY 2007, ZARAGOZA
7. EDUARDO VICENTE DE VERA, 5 NOVEMBER 2008, ZARAGOZA
8. ELOY FERNÁNDEZ CLEMENTE, 23 OCTOBER 2006, ZARAGOZA
9. EMILIO EIROA, 17 FEBRUARY 2010, ZARAGOZA
10. GASPAR MAIRAL BUIL, 27 NOVEMBER 2006, ZARAGOZA
11. GONZALO M BORRÁS GUALIS, 28 NOVEMBER 2006, ZARAGOZA
12. GUILLERMO FATÁS CABEZA, 28 NOVEMBER 2006, ZARAGOZA
13. GUSTAVO ALCALDE, 26 OCTOBER 2007, ZARAGOZA
14. HIPÓLITO GÓMEZ DE LAS ROCES, 24 OCTOBER 2006, ZARAGOZA
15. JOSÉ LUIS ALONSO, 26 OCTOBER 2007, ZARAGOZA
16. JOSÉ LIUS TRASOBARES, 4 NOVEMBER 2008, ZARAGOZA
17. JOSÉ RAMÓN MARCUELLO, 23 OCTOBER 2006, ZARAGOZA
18. JUAN ANTONIO BOLEA FORADADA, 25 OCTOBER 2006, ZARAGOZA
19. LORENZO LASCORZ, 20 FEBRUARY 2007, ZARAGOZA
20. NIEVES IBEAS, 4 NOVEMBER 2008, ZARAGOZA
21. RAMÓN TEJEDOR, 20 FEBRUARY 2007, ZARAGOZA

LIST OF OTHER MEETINGS

1. CARLOS SERRANO LACARRA
2. PEDRO ARROJO AGUDO
3. CHAIME MARCUELLO SERVÓS
4. ELOY FERNÁNDEZ CLEMENTE
5. VICTOR BARRIOS

APPENDIX B

BIOGRAPHIES OF THOSE INTERVIEWED

1. ADOLFO BARRENA – Izquierda Unida

Coordinator General of the Izquierda Unida

Born in Madrid in 1950, he has been Coordinator General of the IU- Aragón since 2002 and is their only Deputy and Spokesman in the Cortes de Aragón. He is a member of the CC OO of Aragón. He was a teacher. He is committed to the defence of the environment and promoted the Initiative Legislativa Popular on renewable energy and was a member of the Consejo de Protección de la Naturaleza de Aragón.

2. ALFREDO BONÉ & ALFREDO CAJAL – Partido Aragonés

ALFREDO BONÉ

General Secretary of Partido Aragonés and Environment Minister

Born in 1955, he has a doctorate in Physical Sciences. He is Secretary General of the Partido Aragonés and a member of its Executive. He is currently Environment Minister in the Aragonese Government and President of the Comisión del Agua de Aragón, as well as assistant spokesperson of the Presidencia del Partido Aragonés (PAR). He has been Chair of the Conferencia de Regiones de Europa sobre Medio Ambiente (ENCORE) since 2006.

ALFREDO CAJAL GAVÍN

Director of the Instituto Aragonés del Agua

Born in 1947, he is a member of the Executive Council of the PAR and President Intercomarcal for Huesca. He was a provincial deputy 1991-99, spokesman for the PAR in the Diputación Provincial de Huesca and deputy President of the Comisión

de Desarrollo y Medio Ambiente. He has held the position of Director of the Instituto Aragonés del Agua since 2002 and a member of the Executive Council of the PAR.

3. ANTONIO PEIRÓ ARROYO

Former Editor of *Andalán*, President of Fundación Gaspar Torrente, Historian

Born in Zaragoza in 1958 he studied Business Studies at the University of Zaragoza and is currently head of its Press Office. He was a member of the Partido del Trabajo de España (PTE) (1975-1978) and the Movimiento Nacionalista Aragonés (MNA) (1978-1980). In the late 1980s he was Secretario de Política Sectorial of the CHA's executive.

He was editor of *Andalán* in its final phase and is a member of the editorial board of *Rolde* and editor of *El Ebro*. He is a member of the Board of Directors of Rolde de Estudios Aragoneses and has held the post of President of the Fundación Gaspar Torrente since 2000. He was one of the first authors to study the history of *aragonesismo* and has published numerous works. His works include *Nacionalismo y regionalismo en Aragón (1868 -1942)* (1981) in collaboration with Bizén Pinilla, *Orígenes del Nacionalismo aragonés (1908-1923)* (1996), *Historia del aragonesismo* (1999, editor) and *Rolde de Estudios Aragoneses 1977-2002. Pasar haciendo caminos* (2002 editor with José I. López Susín and José L Melero).

4. AZUCENA LOZANO – Chunta Aragonesista

President of Chunta Aragonesista 1988-1995

Born in Cimballa (Zaragoza) in 1958 and educated in Calatayud and Zaragoza. At 18 she moved to Madrid with her family where she studied Mathematics in the Universidad Autonoma. After university she worked as an administrator in a transport firm and afterwards wrote textbooks and works for the Mathematics department of the publishing firm Anaya.

In Madrid she came into contact with *aragonesismo* and from 1981 was a member of the Grupo de Emigrantes Aragoneses in Madrid (GEAM). She returned to Aragon in

1984 to teach Mathematics in Huesca. Her return coincided with the time in which the *aragonesista* left-wing forces were actively coming together and this culminated in the formation of the Unión Aragonesista-Chunta Aragonesista, in 1986, of which she was one of the 60 founders. In 1988 she was elected president of the party. She was president from 1988-1995 and has subsequently served as a CHA town councillor in Huesca and regional councillor for la Hoya de Huesca in the last legislatures.

5. BIZÉN FUSTER – Chunta Aragonesista

President of Chunta Aragonesista 1995-2008

Born in 1959 in Naval (Huesca) he has a Diploma in Political Sciences, a degree in History and a Masters in Environmental Management. He was by profession a Local Government Inspector.

He was one of the founders of the CHA in 1986 and was Secretary of its Consello Nazional until 1988. He was its Vice President Nacional between 1988 and 1995 and president of the party from 1995-2008. He is Parliamentary deputy for Huesca. He was President of CHA's Parliamentary group until 2008 and is the CHA parliamentary spokesman on public works, transport and communications, housing and water policy.

He has published works on cultural and *aragonesista* themes and has participated in various cultural bodies such as the Instituto de Estudios Altoaragoneses, the Centro de Estudios del Somontano, the Consello d'a Fabla Aragonesa, the Instituto Aragonés de Antropología and the Rolde de Estudios Aragoneses. He is a patron of the Fundación Gaspar Torrente.

6. CHESÚS BERNAL – Chunta Aragonesista

Secretary General of Chunta Aragonesista 1986-1998

Born in 1960 in Valtorres (Comunidad de Calatayud). He is a Doctor of Romance Philology and is a lecturer in French Philology at the University of Zaragoza and

author of a number of publications on literary, philology, linguistic and socio-cultural themes.

He was one of the founders of the CHA in 1986 and was its first Secretary General from 1986-1998 and Secretary for Institutional Policy. He was a candidate for President of the Aragonese Government in 2003 and 2007. He is a spokesman for the parliamentary group of the CHA and is a Parliamentary deputy for Zaragoza. He is a member of the Rolde de Estudios Aragoneses, the Consello d'a Fabla Aragonesa, patron of the Fundación Gaspar Torrente and the Fundación Manuel Giménez Abad de Estudios Parlamentarios y del Estado Autonómico.

7. EDUARDO VICENTE DE VERA – Chunta Aragonesista

First President of Chunta Aragonesista 1986-1988

He was born in 1952 in Brea. His family moved to Zaragoza when he was 18 months old. At University he studied Engineering, Physics and later Philosophy. After several years as a teacher has worked as a civil servant in the Diputación General de Zaragoza. He is also a literary figure and was a forerunner in the recuperation of the Aragonese language in the mid-1970s and 80s. He published various books of poetry *Garba y Augua* (1976), *Chardín d'ausencias* (1981), stories *Do s'amorta l'alba* (1977) and a historical novel entitled *As fuellas de París: o manuscrito de o tayabb* (1989).

He was one of the founders of the Chunta Aragonesista in 1986 and was its first president from 1986-88. However, for personal reasons he did not stand for re-election. Several years later he was invited by the President of the Partido Aragonés to take up the posts of Director of Culture and later Director of Consumption in the coalition Governments in which the Partido Aragonés participated.

8. ELOY FERNÁNDEZ CLEMENTE

Founding Editor of *Andalán*, founder of Partido Socialista de Aragón

He was born in Andorra in 1942 and is currently Professor of Economic History at the University of Zaragoza. He is regarded as one of the principal ideologues of contemporary *aragonesismo*. He was a member of the founding group of the Partido Socialista de Aragón (PSA) (1976-78), a regional socialist party based on socialism, federalism, self-government and *aragonesismo* led by Emilio Gastón. He was founding editor of the prestigious 1970-80s review magazine *Andalán* and was its editor 1972-77 and 1982-87.

He is a renowned *aragonesista*. However, he has never occupied public office and his membership of political parties has been sporadic, although he is regarded as a ‘guru’ to the CHA. He withdrew from active politics when PSA fused with PSOE 1978 and concentrated on his professional and academic career.¹

He was editor of the *Gran Enciclopedia Aragonesa* (1978-82), author of numerous books on history and economic history of Aragon and a renowned expert on Joaquín Costa. Head of Biblioteca Aragonesa de Cultura. He is also a patron of the Fundación Gaspar Torrente and served as its first president. He was Dean of the Facultad de Ciencias Económicas y Empresariales of the University of Zaragoza 1996-99. He is a highly respected point of reference for journalists, historians and economists and according to José Antonio Labordeta, ‘Eloy is the one who really reinvented Aragon.’ and it was for him that Labordeta wrote his emblematic song *Aragón* in 1968.²

In the 1990s he was one of the columnists who contributed to the section *La Gatera* in the *aragonesista* newspaper *Siete de Aragón* and wrote the column *Diario de un pesimista activo* in the mid 1990s.

9. EMILIO EIROA – Partido Aragonés

Co-founder of Partido Aragonés, President of Aragon 1991-93, Lawyer

¹ ‘Colaboré un tiempo con el PCE, después - nunca lo he ocultado – me he orientado hacia CHA, pero no he vuelto a tener un carnet de partido’ (‘For a time I was involved with the PCE, afterwards – which I have never hidden – I have leaned towards the CHA, but I have never again been a party ‘card holder’), *Los nuevos ilustrados*, José Ignacio López Susín and José Luis Melero Rivas (Zaragoza: Rolde de Estudios Aragoneses, 2007), p. 120.

² Serrano and Ramos, *El aragonesismo en la Transición II*, p. 332.

Born in Vegadeo (Asturias) in 1935, he moved to Zaragoza when he was 15 years old as a result of his father's job in the Guardia Civil. Co-founder of the Partido Aragonés Regionalista (PAR), he stood as a candidate for the position of mayor for the PAR in 1979, 1983, 1987 and 1991 and was deputy mayor between 1987- 91; he was a parliamentary deputy in all of the legislatures of the Cortes de Aragón (currently he is President of the Comisión Institucional). He was a senator in Madrid from 1987 to 1991 as part of a pact between the PSOE and PAR. He was President of the Diputación General de Aragón 1991-1993 following Hipólito Gómez de las Rocas refusal to form a pact with the Partido Popular. He left the presidency following a motion of censure which the PSOE was able to win following the defection of Emilio Gomáriz (PP). He headed the 23 April 1992 and 1993 mass demonstrations which opposed the transfer of water and sought increased autonomy. He was President of the Cortes de Aragón from 1995 to 1999. He has held the post of Secretary General of the Partido Aragonés and Presidente de la Mesa del Comité Nacional.

He was actively involved with the launch and development of the magazine *Aragón 2000* in 1975 and published a book entitled *Razones y retos*, in which he set out his political project for Aragon. He has held the position of Hermano Mayor of the Hermandad de San Juan de la Peña since 1992.

10. GASPAR MAIRAL BUIL

Social Anthropologist, University of Zaragoza

Born in Huesca in 1954 he is a lecturer in Social Anthropology at the University of Zaragoza. He has published numerous books and articles on urban anthropology, identity and nationalism and collective memory. Since 1971 he has worked on various investigations related to the study of risk as a consequence of various projects and works related to the construction of dams in the Ebro river-basin and conflicts produced by the construction of reservoirs together with the cultural significance of water in Aragon.

He is the author of *La identidad de los aragoneses* (Zaragoza: Egido Editorial, 1997) and co-author of *Agua, tierra y supervivencia* (Zaragoza, Prensas Universitarias de Zaragoza, 1997) and *De Joaquín Costa al Pacto del Agua. Los aragoneses y el agua* (Zaragoza: Egido Editorial, 2000)

11. GONZALO M. BORRÁS GUALIS

Member of founding group of *Andalán* and Partido Socialista de Aragón, contributor to the section *La Gatera* for *Siete de Aragón*

Gonzalo Borrás is Professor of Art History at the University of Zaragoza. He wrote his doctoral thesis on *Mudéjar en los valles del Jalón y el Jiloco* and is a leading authority on *Mudéjar* art and architecture.

Like many intellectuals of his generation he was critical of the Franco regime and was also one of the intellectuals who founded *Andalán* in the early 1970s. He was a member of the editorial team and wrote many articles on Aragonese art. He was also involved with the Partido Socialista de Aragón (PSA) in this period and stood as a candidate for Congress in the General Elections of 1977 for Teruel. After the PSA was absorbed by the PSOE he stood as an independent candidate for the Senate in 1979 and for the Ayuntamiento de Zaragoza as a candidate for the Partido Comunista. He won election in the first democratic municipal elections. He was deputy mayor to the socialist mayor Ramón Sáinz de Varanda and was responsible for the *Promoción del Patrimonio Histórico y Extensión Cultural*. The collaboration between the PSOE and PCE was beset with difficulties and Borrás abandoned political life to concentrate on his academic career. In the early 1990s he stood for the town council of Zaragoza for the CHA as an independent candidate. Support for CHA had not then taken off and he did not win election. He was awarded the Cruz de San Jorge by the Diputación Provincial de Teruel in 1979. He collaborated with Eloy Fernández Clement on the production of the *Gran Enciclopedia Aragonesa*.

He is committed to raising awareness of Aragonese culture and identity through his studies of Aragonese art and architecture in the various cultural and historical periods. He is currently a director of the Institución Fernando el Católico, the

Instituto de Estudios Islámicos and patron of the Fundación Gaspar Torrente. He has also had connections with the CHA.

12. GUILLERMO FATÁS CABEZA

Editor of *Heraldo de Aragón*, member of founding group of *Andalán*

Guillermo Fatás is Professor of Ancient History at Zaragoza University and director of the Institución Fernando el Católico. He belonged to group of intellectuals who founded *Andalán* in the 1970s and was a member of its editorial team. (Its appearance was due to his negotiations with the Civil Governor.) He is regarded as a brilliant polemicist and wrote articles on Spanish political analysis, culture and “*chismografía*” (gossip) and he is considered to be ‘one of the creators of opinion’ in Aragon.³ He contributed to the *Enciclopedia de Aragón* and regularly writes for *Heraldo de Aragón*. Until recently he was editor of *Heraldo de Aragón*, Aragon’s principal daily newspaper (readership of 300,000), which was founded in 1895 and has a long history of interest in the Ebro, opposition to the transfer of water and promotion of the image of it as ‘Father Ebro’. In the introduction to a book published by *Heraldo* entitled *Padre Ebro* he wrote, ‘*Heraldo* has been a constant witness and loyal chronicler of the life of Aragon’s most representative river since 1895’. *Heraldo* was responsible for collecting more than 8,000 signatures opposing the transfer in 1974 and 63,632 in 2000 in opposition to the PHN. He was awarded the Medalla de plata de la ciudad de Zaragoza and the Cruz al Mérito Militar.

13. GUSTAVO ALCALDE – Partido Popular

President of the Partido Popular

Born in 1955 in Calatayud (Zaragoza). He has a degree in Medicine and Surgery and specialised in Family and community Medicine. From 1988-1991 he was head of the Provincial Service for Health, Social Wellbeing and Work of the Diputación General de Aragón in Teruel.

³ See for instance titles such as ‘Entrevista con Guillermo Fatás – uno de los creadores de opinión con más vigencia en Aragón’, *Alcorze*, No. 86, October 1988, p. 12.

He was Secretary General of the PP in Aragon from 1993-1996 and General Coordinator from 1996-2001. In 1995 he was elected to the Aragonese Parliament and in 1996 became a Congress deputy. In 1999 he returned to the Regional Parliament and was spokesman and President of the Parliamentary Group of the PP. He became president of the PP in Aragon in May 2001 following the assassination of Manuel Giménez Abad in Zaragoza by ETA. He stood as a candidate for the presidency of Aragon in the elections of 2007. In June 2008 he announced his intention not to stand for re-election.

14. HIPÓLITO GÓMEZ DE LAS ROCES – Partido Aragonés

Founder and First President of PAR and President of Aragon 1987-91

Born in Nava, Asturias in 1932. He is a lawyer and politician and has a degree in Law from the Universidad Complutense. He is a member of the Cuerpo Jurídico Militar and Abogado del Estado. He was President of the Diputación Provincial de Zaragoza (1974-1977) under Franco and in 1974 he opposed the transfer of water while Franco regime was still in power. When he was a deputy in the Congreso de los Diputados he took part in the writing of the Spanish Constitution. He was amongst those who put forward an amendment calling for the suppression of the word nationality in Article II. Due to Basque-Catalan pressure it was included. From this moment he called for it to be included in the Aragonese Statute as well.

He was President of the Diputación Provincial de Zaragoza and a deputy in the Congreso de los Diputados first representing the Candidatura Aragonesa Independiente de Centro (CAICA) which he founded in 1977. In 1978 he was a founder and principal mentor of the PAR, which played an important role in the development of Aragonese autonomy and represented it in the Aragonese Parliament 1977-87. He was the second of Aragon's presidents in the Democratic period 1987-91. In 1991 he declined to take up a second the Presidency in coalition with the PP and passed it over to Emilio Eiroa. Now retired from politics, he still practices as a lawyer. He is the author of various books and articles and a regular contributor to the press.

15. JOSÉ LUIS ALONSO

President of the Confederación Hidrográfica del Ebro 2004-2008

Born in Zaragoza in 1948. He is an agricultural engineer specialising in agrarian economics and has a Diploma in Business Management from the University of Navarra. From 1977-80 he was Chief of Studies of the Instituto Pirenaico de Estudios Agrarios in Sabiñánigo. After a brief period in education he held various posts such as president of the irrigation union of Santa Fe on the river Huerva, technical secretary of the UAGA-COAG responsible for water, member of the General Council of ENESA (Entidad Estatal de Seguros Agrarios) and founder of the first European ovine cooperative and member of the Sociedad de Garantía Recíproca. 1983-88 he was Director of the Municipal Consumer Information Office of the Ayuntamiento de Zaragoza and belonged to various consumer associations. 1988-92 he worked in publication and research in relation to natural resources. From 1993 to the present time he has worked as an official for the Ayuntamiento de Zaragoza in the Treasury.

In 2004 he was named as president of the Confederación Hidrográfica del Ebro by the Minister of the Environment Cristina Narbona. He was President until 2008.

16. JOSÉ LUIS TRASOBARES

Newspaper editor, columnist, political analyst with *Heraldo de Aragón* and *El Periódico de Aragón*

Born in Zaragoza in 1953. In 1970 he began his studies in Philosophy and Arts and Journalism in the University of Zaragoza and the Escuela Oficial de Madrid respectively. At this time he was part of the anti-Franco opposition and took part in the foundation of a group known as the Larga Marcha hacia la Revolución Socialista and from the university campus he created and directed the clandestine magazine *Portavoz*.

He joined *Heraldo de Aragón* in 1975 and during the Transition worked as an editor specialising in political and union matters and later as head of the Aragon section and editor in chief of the Área Informativa and chief of Radio Heraldo news.

In 1988 he became sub-editor of *Heraldo*, directing the modernisation of its news and editorials. Whilst with *Heraldo* he wrote the opinion column 'Independencia 29' which became a referent of Aragonese political and social life. In 2001 *Heraldo* underwent substantial change in its Consejo de Administración and Trasobares left after 25 years with the paper. A few months later he began work with *El Periódico de Aragón* as editorial adviser and columnist, writing the column 'El Independiente'. He is author of *La segunda oportunidad. Crónica sentimental de los años setenta* (Zaragoza: Institución Fernando el Católico, 2007).

17. JOSÉ RAMÓN MARCUELLO

Journalist for *Andalán*, Director of *Trébede*, writer and radio broadcaster

José Ramón Marcuello is a journalist, writer radio broadcaster and was a journalist with *Andalán* and editor of *Trébede*. His books include *El Ebro*, 1986, *Mitos, leyendas y tradiciones del Ebro*, 1996, *El Ebro de punta a punta*, 1995, *Los ríos de Aragón*, 1992. In his books he writes about myths, legends and traditions of the Ebro.

He spent more than 14 years working on his passion of writing about the Ebro, and has become one of the leading experts on this river. In an interview published in *Siete de Aragón* he talks of the close relationship between man and river in the course of human history and how the Ebro has been ignored by those living close to it over the course of the last century. Like many of those interviewed he uses the term '*vivir de espaldas al río*' to describe this relationship.

18. JUAN ANTONIO BOLEA FORADADA – Partido Aragonés

First President of Aragón 1978-81

Juan Antonio Bolea was the first President of Aragón in the pre-autonomous period, 1978-81(UDC). In 1977 he stood as an Independent, within the Unión de Centro Democrático list and was elected Deputy for Zaragoza. In 1978 the Diputación General de Aragón was made up of 6 UDC councillors, with Bolea taking the role of president, plus 5 from PSOE and 1 from the Candidatura Aragonesa Unidad

Democrática and 3 Presidents of Diputaciones Provinciales who had affiliated with UDC. He won a seat in the Senate in 1979-82, this time as a member of the PAR. He was a Deputy in the first three Legislatures of the Cortes de Aragón.

He was awarded a doctorate in 1968 from the University of Zaragoza for his thesis 'Régimen jurídico de las Comunidades de regantes' and he is author of *Los riegos de Aragón* (1978). The importance he placed on irrigation projects in Aragon is summed up in the following statement published in *Heraldo* in 1973, 'the culmination of Aragon's basic irrigation projects is an urgent task. Its completion is a basic condition for getting on the road to development in vast areas of our land'.⁴

19. LORENZO LASCORZ

Founder of Chunta Aragonesista, Editor of *Siete de Aragón*, co-founder of Coordinadora Aragonesa de Pueblos afectados por Embalses (COAPE).

Lascorz has close links with Chunta Aragonesista being one of its founders and member of its Comité Nacional and Secretario de Organización. He is currently President of the Maya de Pleitos which is responsible for interpreting the Statutes of the CHA and is its disciplinary body. His wife, Azucena Lozano is a CHA councillor for Huesca and was the second President of the CHA. In 1991 Lascorz stood as a CHA candidate for mayor of Huesca. He is co-founder of la Coordinadora Aragonesa de Pueblos afectados por Embalses (COAPE).

He was editor of the weekly *aragonesista* newspaper/magazine *Siete de Aragón*, which had a lifespan of 11 years from September 1993-April 2004 and was an outlet for analysis and reflection on Aragonese issues such as identity, culture, politics, dams and flooding of valleys and *aragonesista* themes. *Siete* was progressive in nature and was not affiliated to any particular political party. By offering a critique of politics in Aragon it encountered a number of conflicts. It was not looked on favourably by the right and in the period of Conservative government in Aragon there were attempts to silence it. The magazine ceased publication in 2004 because of financial problems and problems over ideological issues.

⁴ *Heraldo*, Especial Pilar, 12 October 1994, p. 10.

The paper had numerous prestigious collaborators, writers and weekly columnists and benefited from articles from well known figures such as Eloy Fernández Clemente, Gonzalo Borrás, José Antonio Labordeta, Emilio Gastón, Antonio Pérez, J. A. Belloch, Nicolau etc. Following the demise of *Siete*, a new publication called *Qriterio* emerged in an attempt to fill the gap.

20. NIEVES IBEAS – Chunta Aragonesista

4th President of Chunta Aragonesista 2008-

Born in Vitoria (Álava) in 1961, she is a Doctor of French Philology and has a degree in Romance Philology. She is a lecturer at Zaragoza University and was Vice rector of Social and Cultural Projection. She was a founding member of the Seminario Interdisciplinar de Estudios de la Mujer of the Universidad de Zaragoza. She is the author of various books and author of numerous articles on literature and feminism. She has been a member of the Rector Council of the Instituto Aragonés de la Mujer.

She joined CHA in 1991 and became a deputy in the Aragonese Parliament in June 2007 and was the CHAs spokesperson on Education, Culture and Sport and Health. She became president of the party in 2008.

21. RAMÓN TEJEDOR SANZ – PSOE

President of Aragon 1995, Secretario General de Relaciones con las Cortes, Secretary general of the Parliamentary Group of the PSOE

Born in Zaragoza in 1955 and has a degree in Physical Education and diplomas in Environmental Engineering and Business Administration. He currently holds the post of Secretario General de Relaciones con las Cortes in the Aragonese Government.

Following the resignation of the Socialist President of the Government of Aragon, José Marco, he was president for 7 months and afterwards spent 2 years as Consejero de la Presidencia (1993-95). He has been a PSOE deputy in the Cortes de Aragón for

16 years and is currently Secretario general adjunto del Grupo Parlamentario Socialista de las Cortes de Aragón and in the last legislature was parliamentary spokesman for the group.

APPENDIX C

POEMS DEDICATED TO THE RIVER EBRO THAT APPEARED IN THE MAGAZINE EL EBRO 1917-1936

LA VIRGEN Y EL RÍO BY JULIO CALVO ALFARO 1922

El río enamorado se muere de esperanza
la Virgen se lo mira; camino sin llegar,
la mar está lontana, se siente marinero
y se quitó las calzas para arrojarse al mar.

The river in love is dying of hope
the Virgin watches it; route without an end,
the sea is in the distance, it feels like a mariner
and takes off its breeches to cast itself into the sea.

La Virgen se lo mira alzarse en una barca
con velas de gaviotas y quilla de cristal,
la tiran caracolas de nácar y corales
y cangrejos de ámbar y caballos de mar

The Virgin watches it get onto a boat
with seagulls as sails and a glass keel,
brushed by mother-of-pearl shells, corals
amber crabs and sea-horses

La dama de los vientos de amor está celosa,
al ver de picos pardos que escapa su galán;
la Virgen se los mira y al ábside sin broche
del sol le pone un punto la sombra del Pilar.

The lady of the winds of love is jealous,
on seeing the enjoyment her beau is having;
the Virgin watches them and the apse not in the
grip of the sun casts a shadow of el Pilar.

Cuando amanece el Puente en áncora se leva
y la quilla es un charco de luz en un fanal;
la vela bien se fincha, se funde el arco en
sangre,
el sol se rasga en tiras de vino y de mazapán.

When day breaks the anchored Bridge weighs
sail and the keel is a pool of light in a beacon;
the sail becomes conceited, and becomes one
with the arch,
the sun is torn into strips of wine and marzipan.

¿Al alba, quién se porte por náutica aventura?
Ulises, Don Quijote, Roldán o Bergerac?
Las ondas a las riberas expanden la leyenda;
Don Ebro enamorado perdido está en el mar.

Who's game for a sea adventure at dawn?
Ulysses, Don Quijote, Roldán or Bergerac?
The waves at the shores spread the legend;
Don Ebro in love is lost in the sea.

Don Ebro se ha peinado la hirsuta cabellera,
merodeó una tarde la calle de Cerdán;
mercase añil la blusa, las calzas de estameña,
sandalias marineras y camisa de cal.

Don Ebro had combed his rough head of hair,
went roving one night in the street of Cerdán;
buying himself a blue smock, serge hose,
seafarers' sandals and a rough shirt.

La brisa trae mariscos con ráfagas de náyades,
virolitas de las olas, peces de celofán
y rumbos de platino, grores de borrasca
con besos de yodinas y caricias de sal.

The breeze brings shellfish with flashes of
naiads, tips of the waves, cellophane fish
and platinum shapes, sounds of the storm
along with iodine kisses and salty caresses.

La Dama de los Vientos no duerme de celosa
la luna y los estrellas se han puesto el antifaz;
ni el Puente es ya diamante, ni el alba es
acuarela,
Don Ebro enamorado perdido está del mar.

The Lady of the Winds can't sleep because of
jealousy, the moon and the stars have put on a
veil; the Bridge is not illuminated and the dawn
not yet a watercolour,
Don Ebro in love is lost to the sea.

EBRO PADRE BY JULIO CALVO ALFARO 1923

Yo tengo para ti
Un himno guardado
En mi
Cofre de Sándalo labrado

Y hay en cada palabra
Un tesoro,
Cincelado con Oro
Artífice que labra

La voz de Dios,
Será eterno
En los
Anales del Humano Invierno

Ebro padre,
Aragón, por ti se abre
En dos, porque te sientas
Y presientas

En su amada Unidad,
En el espacio
La verdad vive sola;
Es un topacio

Que luce,
Con luz que no tiene fin.
Ebro padre, vive sin
Que la duda por tus aguas cruce

Si te canto es
Porque eres sabio y justo
Y ves,
Y ríes. Y eres sentimental y adusto

Ebro padre, si me rindo
A tus pies,
Piensa que, en ti, son tres
Los Dioses porque brindo

El de la Justicia que preside
Tu surco en la Tierra;
El Agua que no hierra
Y el del alma que encierra

Ebro padre perdona
A los que son tus hijastros;
En la ajena casona
Nacieron de padrastros

I have for you
A hymn stored
In my
hand fashioned Sandalwood Box

And in every word there is
A treasure
Engraved with gold
A craftsman who labours

The voice of God,
Will be everlasting
In the
Annals of the Human Winter

Father Ebro,
Because of you Aragon is opened in two,
because of your presence and existence

In your beloved Unity
In the great beyond
Truth alone lives
It is a topaz

That shines
With light that has no end.
Father Ebro, it lives without doubting
That your waters will flow through it

If I sing of you it is
Because you are wise and just
You see
You laugh. And you are sentimental and austere

Father Ebro, if I throw myself
At your feet,
I believe that in you there are three
Gods because of this I toast you

That of the *Justicia* that presides over
Your furrow in the Earth;
That of the Water that leaves no mark
And that of the soul that encircles

Father Ebro forgive
Your stepchildren
In someone else's large house
Born of stepfathers

Ebro padre, perdona
Al pobre que blasona
De riquezas extrañas
Y de ajenas patrañas

Perdónales también,
A los que nunca sintieron
Tu voz ni basaron tu Sien
Ni tus aguas bebieron

Ebro padre, perdona
A los equivocados
Amparados
En su falsa patrona

Ellos son,
Clavicordio sin son.
Pupila que no ve
Religión sin fe

Enamorados sin amante
Frío
Soledad. Cauce sin río
que vaya adelante

Como las sombras sin pasión
Religión
Sin dogma que dirija
Ni norma que corrija

Son como aves errantes
Sin nido,
Como rayos radiantes
De un sol anónimo y perdido

Ebro padre, perdónales;
Su culpa es su ignorancia;
Abrázales
En tu santa constancia

Y rézales tus Normas
Al oído
Y toda la poesía de tu Ser,
Para que puedan ver

Tus Gracias y tus Formas
No mueras para ellos: ¡en olvido!

Father Ebro, forgive
The poor who boast of
Foreign riches
And other people's lies

Also pardon
Those who have never felt
Your voice nor found your Temple
Nor drank your waters

Father Ebro, forgive
Those who have erred
Shielded
In their false patroness

They are,
A clavichord without sound
A pupil that does not see
Religion without faith

In love but without a lover
Cold
Solitude. A river-bed without a river
That may go forward

Like shadows without passion
Religion
Without a dogma that guides it
Or a standard that corrects it

They are like wandering birds
Without nests
Like radiant rays
Of an anonymous and lost sun

Father Ebro, forgive them,
Their guilt is their ignorance
Embrace them
In your holy steadfastness

And read them your Rules
Out loud
And all of the poetry of your Being
In order that they may see

Your mercy and your Ways
Don't die for them. Forget them!

EL EBRO ESTÁ LLAMANDO BY JULIO CALVO ALFARO 1926

Ya abrieron las compuertas
que vedaban te al mar?
¿Ya a través de las puertas
Del Azul volverás a mirar?
¿Y
Tus ojos de bronce y de acero
Y tu cerebro austero
A soñar tornará?
¿Al fin ya se ha aclarado
El oráculo de
Los hombres prudentes del pasado
¿Qué en tí pusieron fe?
¿Ya el navío adentrándose, al pasar
Pondrá tu entraña
Con la caricia extraña
De su hélice besar?
¿Ya no serás el padre
Viudo, y sin porvenir
De fecundar la madre
Condenada a morir
¿Ya no estarás tan triste
Forjando
Mis castillos, soñando
Con aquel mar que viste?
¿Te espera el Hada Verde
Con los brazos abiertos
Y el barco que hoy se pierde
Hallará acaso un puerto?
¿La espuma de Venus Afrodita
Y tu onda venerable
Podrán
Por una amable
Nereida darse cita?
¿Te espera, Ebro monástico,
De austeridad de fraile
La aventura, lo rico, lo fantástico
La recepción y el baile.

Galeras de oro
Carabelas
De argentadas velas
Y de oculto tesoro
Románticas hazañas
De azul. Náyades, gnomos
Princesas glaucas de amorosas mañas
Y caballos con alas en los lomos
Cada uno de tus besos,
Como en un cuento de hadas,

Are the floodgates already open that
stopped you reaching the sea?
Now will you once again look through the gates
Del Azul?
And
Will your eyes of bronze and steel
And your austere mind
Dream again?
Finally has the oracle of the wise men of the
past now become clear

Who put their faith in you?
Is the ship now coming in, and on passing
Will it invest your core
With the foreign caress
And the kiss of its propeller?
Will you no longer be the father
Widower, and without a future
In which to impregnate the mother
Condemned to die?
Will you no longer be so sad
Forging
My castles, dreaming
With that sea that you saw?
Does the Green Fairy await you
With open arms
And will the ship that is lost today
perhaps find a port?
Will the foam of Venus Aphrodite
And your venerable wave
Agree to a meeting
through
the intervention of a kind Nereida?
Are adventure, riches and fantastic things,
celebration and dancing
awaiting you, monastic Ebro
with monk-like austerity?

Golden galleys
Caravels
With silvery sails
And hidden treasure
Romantic exploits
Of blueness. Naiads, gnomes
glaucous princesses with wicked amorous ways.
And horses with wings on their loins
Each one of your kisses,
Like in a fairy tale,

Obrará el embeleso.
De cambiar las llanadas
Donde el erial

La flor:
Donde el yermo el rosal;
Donde el pardo el verdor
Donde un día llorara el emigrante
Su eterna despedida,
El alma dolorida
Se encontrará un diamante
En aquella aldeica
Abandonada,
Las casas rotas y el surco sin lapica

Habréis de ver nacer una Fuente Dorada
Donde el silencio era
Lenguaje de los muertos,
La voz de los motores dulces y fiera

Resonará en los huertos
Despertad

Si el agua del Padre Ebro os pone alas
A vuestras ilusiones, que son galas
De fuerza y voluntad.
Despertad, si un buen día
Oís en la cancela
Centenaria el ruido de la espuela
De la suprema Guía
Lleva la voz de Díos:
'Aragón os reclama, aragoneses
Descolgadlos arneses
De gala y cabalgad en pos'
Dicen que está dispuesta
Por el alto destino
Que la ocasión su puesto
Sólo una vez nos cede en su camino
¡Ay, del que negligente
Abandone la lid!
¡No beberá más nunca ya en la fuente
Del mágico adalid!
Para él el sol poniente
No volverá a salir;
Para él la noche será eterna y corporal y
ardiente.

Despertad, despertad que ya amanece;
El Ebro es redención
Y amorosa pasión
Que todo lo ilumina y todo acrece.
Maldito el pesimista

Will work the enchantment
To change the flat land
Where there is no cultivation

The flower:
Where there is wasteland, the rose bush
Where there is drabness, lushness
Where one day the emigrant may have cried
His eternal goodbye,
The aching soul
Will find a diamond
In that little village
Abandoned,
The crumbling houses and furrows without a
marker
You will have to see the birth of a Golden
Fountain where silence used to be
The language of the dead,
The voice of the sweet engines and the wild
animal
Will resound in the orchards
Wake up

If the water of Father Ebro gives wings
To our hopes, which are fine things
Of strength and freewill.
Wake up, if one fine day
You hear at the centennial gate
the noise of the spur
of the supreme Guide
The voice of God proclaims
'Aragon, is calling you, Aragonese
Take down your ceremonial harnesses
And ride in pursuit
They say that you are prepared
For the great destiny
That the occasion commands
Only once it gives way to us in its route
Ay! How negligent
That it should abandon the fight!
Now it will never again drink from the
Fountain of the magical champion!
For him the western sun
Will not come out again
For him the night will be everlasting, corporal
and ardent

Wake up, wake up now that it is dawn
The Ebro is redemption
And amorous passion
That lights up everything and everything grows
Cursed is the pessimist

Maldito el fariseo
Y aquel reo
Que vende su conciencia por la simple
amatista
¡Despertad de una vez!
El Ebro está llamando. Mas si la hoz
No habéis de separar mas nunca de la vid.
¡Dormid siempre! ¡Dormid!

Cursed is the hypocrite
And the criminal
Who sells his soul for a simple
amethyst
Wake up at once!
The Ebro is calling. But if the sickle
Nevermore have you to be separated from the
vine.
Sleep forever! Sleep!

CANTO AL EBRO BY RENE LLANAS DE NIUBO 1922

Dios te guarde, Padre Ebro, el de las aguas
turbulentas y bravías como el espíritu
de nuestra raza.

God keep you, Father Ebro, with your
turbulent untamed waters like the spirit of our
Race.

Padre Ebro: Tú encarnas los tres elementos
básicos y fundamentales de nuestra Patria.
Eres Raza, Historia y eres Fe

Father Ebro: You embody the three basic and
fundamental elements of our Patria (homeland).
You are Race (Ethnicity), History and Faith.

PENSAMIENTO ARAGONÉS BY FRANCISCO BUENO 1923

Conquistemos las fuentes del progreso,
con la ciencia, el trabajo y la energía;
transformemos la actual geografía,
hasta que el Ebro sea, el *emporio* inmenso.
Desplegando el esfuerzo más intenso
que pudiera soñar la fantasía,
hagamos del Ebro, la flotante vía;
por donde navegue, el tráfico diverso.

We will conquer the sources of progress
with science, work and energy;
we will transform the current geography,
until the Ebro becomes, an immense *emporium*.
Unfolding the most intense force
That could be imagined,
let us make the Ebro, the waterway
through which all kinds of traffic would pass.

Con el grandiosa Pantano de Reinoso,
la gran obra genial, maravillosa,
que ha trazado, un *ingenio* de Aragón.
Y, aumentando el floreciente regadío,
con las aguas de caudaloso río,
sea un bello Vergel, nuestra Región.

With the magnificent reservoir of Reinoso,
a great work of genius, a marvel,
an example of outstanding Aragonese talent.
And, increasing the flourishing irrigated land,
With the waters of this voluminous river,
So that our Region may be a fine Orchard.

CELAJES (SUNSET CLOUDS) BY PERICO EL COPLERO 1926

Tortosa por Aragón,
y el Ebro y navegable.
¡Bonita cara pondrán
más de cuatro catalanes!

Tortosa for Aragon,
and the Ebro and navigable.
That will make more than a few Catalans as sick
as parrots!

Te diré en media palabra

I'll tell you in just a few words

que es la Confederación:
“Si ahora no nos luce el pelo,
¡que nos den la Extrema Unción!
El Gobierno da los cuartos,
Lorenzo Pardo, la ciencia,
Si el País ayuda un poco
El milagro es cosa hecha

Regularizar el Ebro
es obra morrocotuda:
pero la ideó un baturro
y se saldrá con la suya

¡Padre Ebro! ¡Padre Ebro!
todo es hoy mieles y rosas.
¿De veras no volveremos
a sudar la gota gorda?

Medita con migo un poco
si esto Jauja no será:
Teruel-Lérida, acabado.

Idem el Val de Zafan,
Altos Riego, de Monegros
un vergel hicieron ya;
desde Bedous hasta Zuero
los trenes vienen y van
Todo cristo riega a manta
Y cosecha más y más.
Baturrito, baturrito
ahora ya puedes cantar
“Ebro arriba, Ebro abajo
barcos vienen, barcos van.”
Ya es tierra de Promisión
el valle de Josafat
A Barcelona no emigran
más aragoneses ya
porque tienen en su casa
cuanto pueden desear

¡Quién lo había de decir!
¡Quién lo había de soñar!
que ataron con longaniza
los perros en mi lugar!
Esto a la sombra de un tiemblo
de Soto de Macanaz
cantaban jugando al coro
los niños de arrabal.

That it's the Confederation:
“Now if we are looking down and out,
Let them give us Extreme Unction.
The Government gives the money,
Lorenzo Pardo gives the science
If Spain helped a little
The miracle is already done.

Regulating the Ebro
is a tremendous work:
but it was planned as a popular goal
that will have its own way

Father Ebro! Father Ebro!
Today everything is honey and roses.
Will we really never again
sweat blood?

Ponder with me for a while
If this Promised land won't be:
Teruel-Lérida, finished.

Idem the Val de Zafan,
Altos Riego, they've already
made an orchard of Monegros;
from Bedous to Zuero
the trains come and go
Every crucifix is watered abundantly
And more and more is harvested
Baturrito, baturrito
now you can soon sing
“Ebro upstream, Ebro downstream
ships come, ships go.”
Now it's Promised land
the valley of Josafat
No more Aragonese will now
emigrate to Barcelona
because at home they have
all they could possibly desire

Who said it!
Who dreamed of it!
That they tied
up the dogs with string in my place!
This in the shade of a poplar tree
of Soto de Macanaz
the slum children of Arrabal used to sing
playing in a ring.

APPENDIX D

INTELLECTUALS INVOLVED IN COMPILATION OF LA GRAN ENCICLOPEDIA ARAGONESA

Director, Eloy Fernández Clemente

Arte, Gonzalo M. Borrás Gualis

Biología, Isaías Zarazaga Burillo

Ciencia y Pensamiento, Emilio Balaguer Perigüel

Cine y espectáculos, Manuel Rotellar Mata

Derecho, Jesús Delgado Echeverría

Economía, José Antonio Biescas Ferrer

Folklore y Antropología, Antonio Beltrán Martínez

Geografía, Vicente Bielza de Ory

Heráldica y Genealogía, Ángel Canellas López

Historia Antigua, Guillermo Fatás Cabeza

Historia Contemporánea, Carlos Forcadell Álvarez

Historia de la Música, Juan José Carreras López

Historia Medieval, Antonio Ubieto Arteta

Historia Moderna, José Antonio Armillas Vicente

Lenguas, Francho Nagore Laín

Literatura, José-Carlos Mainer Baqué

Prehistoria y Arqueología, Manuel A. Martín Bueno

Sociedad, José Ramón Marcuello Calvín

APPENDIX E

PRINCIPAL RIVERS OF ARAGON

River	Length (km)	River Basin (km ²)	Average Annual Flow (Hm ³)
Ebro	930 ⁽¹⁾	85,997 ⁽¹⁾	19,669 ⁽²⁾
Aragón	192	8,521	1,577
Gállego	215	4,009	1,216
Cinca	170	9,699	3,093
Noguera	130	2,046	722
Ribagorzana	126	2,957	239
Jiloca	44.8	528	137
Queiles	234	9,718	726
Hueva	128	1,020	67
Aguas vivas	98	1,330	45
Marín	116	2,112	115
Guadalope	160	3,982	265
Matarraña	97	1,727	115
Turia	243	6,250	1,147 ⁽³⁾
Mijares	110	4,028	37 ⁽²⁾

⁽¹⁾ Flows for 330 km through Aragonese territory. The Aragonese portion of the river basin is 47,650 km².

⁽²⁾ On exiting Aragón.

⁽³⁾ In Teruel.

Source: Tomás Giner Ciércoles, *Aragón: ayer y hoy*, p. 146.

APPENDIX F

HARDSHIP, EMIGRATION AND EFFECTS OF WATER SCARCITY IN THE SONGS AND POEMS OF JOSE ANTONIO LABORDETA

Songs and poems	Extract
<p>Carta a Lucino (1974)</p> <p>Reflects the problems and despair caused by the flooding of valleys. An old emigrant writes to his friend who has committed suicide in the waters of the reservoir which has ‘drowned’ the village where they were born not knowing of the fate of his friend. There are references to the words on his mother’s grave covered by the water, the widows of two people killed while working on the reservoir and the unfulfilled promises of the construction company. The final verse reflects the despair of the situation.</p>	<p>Algunas veces pienso ir al pantano y cuando esté bien lleno tirarme dentro.</p>
<p>Las arcillas (1966)</p> <p>Talks of the clay soil that produces poverty and hunger throughout the year, which results in emigration and an ageing population.</p>	<p>Estas arcillas viejas Estas arcillas pobres sólo crían miseria sólo producen hambre....</p> <p>Sólo quedan los viejos y los barrancos Como esqueletos rotos contra la tarde.</p>
<p>Todos repiten lo mismo (1968)</p> <p>Illustrates the hardships suffered by a small landowner as a result of the harsh climate with its terrible extremes for the harvests.</p>	<p>Para navidad la oliva, para el verano la siega, para el otoño la siembra y para la primavera nada.</p>
<p>Dura tierra (1971)</p> <p>One of the most serious problems is drought.</p>	<p>Esta extensa dura tierra vuelve otra vez a mí: hoy sobre las altiplanicies, cuando el agua no llega para todos...</p>

<p>Voz dura (1970)</p> <p>Talks of crop failure as a result of drought and the hardship this causes on lands cultivated in the traditional way without irrigation systems.</p>	<p>Se siembra trigo y cebada, Recoges nada, recoges nada. Tan sólo está tu miseria Inacabada, inacabada.</p>
<p>Inciertas mañanadas (1977)</p> <p>Illustrates another of the consequences of drought – emigration.</p>	<p>Inciertas mañanas, no viene el agua. Si a la tarde no acude el agua’ se marcharán del sitio, se irán sin nada...</p>
<p>Jota del verano (1981)</p> <p>Illustrates the results of the August heat with the dry cracked ravines that appear where there was once water.</p>	<p>Cuando llega el mes de agosto se vuelve sofoco el cielo, las aguas se hacen barrancos y de pena cruje el suelo.</p>
<p>La vieja (1968)</p> <p>Dedicated to the emotional hardships that occur as a result of the emigration of the younger members of the family.</p>	<p>La tristeza de tus ojos de tanto mirar hijos que van hacia Francia y otros hacia la ciudad.</p>
<p>Por el camino del polvo (1966)</p> <p>Summarises the fate of the olive tree, the flocks and the crops grown in the dry ravines as a result of climatic disasters. As a result of these misfortunes the only ‘way out’ is emigration.</p>	<p>Estáte toda la vida Amorrao a los secanos pa que luego, desde arriba te lo quieten de las manos El aire abrasa la siembra, el sol seca la cosecha y en el invierno, los hielos, dejan la oliva destrecha.</p>
<p>Cuando se agosta el campo (1971)</p> <p>Once again emigration is the only alternative when the land dries out as a result of water scarcity.</p>	<p>Cuando se agosta el campo y se hace sol el cielo, sólo queda el camino como consuelo</p> <p>Día tras día surge la despida. Se abandonan los campos, labor perdido.</p>

<p>Aragón (1968)</p> <p>Lists the four cardinal points and relates these to the hardships suffered by Aragón: Catalonia and emigration, the useless majesty of the Moncayo, the ‘silence’ of the two mountain ranges surrounding the Ebro depression and the problem of people abandoning their land.</p>	<p>Polvo, niebla viento y sol, y donde hay agua una huerta y al Norte los Pirineos: esta tierra es Aragón.</p> <p>Al Norte los Pirineos y al Sur la tierra callada. Pasa el Ebro por el centro con su soledad a la espalda.</p> <p>Dicen que hay tierras al Este Donde se trabaja y pagan. Hacia el Oeste el Moncayo como un Dios que ya no ampara.</p> <p>Desde tiempos a esta parte vamos camino de nada. Vamos a ver cómo el Ebro con su soledad se marcha.</p> <p>Y con él van en compañía las gentes de estas vaguadas, de estos valles, de estas tierras, de estas huertas arruinadas.</p>
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Sources: Mainer, *Labordeta*.
Labordeta, *Tu y yo y los demás*, Fono Music.

APPENDIX G

Results of General Elections in Aragon 1993 – 2008

	1993		1996		2000		2004		2008	
	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats
IU	9.7	1	9.2	-	3.49	-	2.9	-	2.84	-
PSOE	34.3	7	34.9	5	30.99	4	41.4	7	42.25	8
CHA	-	-	6.5	-	10.48	1	12.2	1	5.00	-
PAR	19.0	1	*	*	5.39	-	4.7	-	5.25	-
PP	32.9	4	48.6*	8*	47.29	8	36.6	5	37.12	5
Others	4.1	-	0.8	-	2.36	-	2.2	-	-	-
Total	100	13	100	13	100	13	100	13	100	13

* PP and PAR stood as a coalition

Sources: Las elecciones autonómicas en España, 1980-1997, p.67.
Aragón Libre No. 27, June 2000, p. 3.
www.20minutos.es/resultados-elecciones/2008/congreso/autonomicas/aragon.

APPENDIX H

Results of Autonomous Elections in Aragon 1983 – 2007

	1983		1987		1991		1995		1999		2003		2007	
	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats
IU	4.0	1	4.9	2	6.7	3	9.2	5	3.81	1	3.10	1	4.12	1
PSOE	46.8	33	35.7	27	40.3	30	25.7	19	30.70	23	38.73	27	41.03	30
CDS	3.3	1	10.2	6	3.1	-	-	-	-	-	0.18	-	-	-
CHA	-	-	1.0	-	2.3	-	4.8	2	11.09	5	14.04	9	8.18	4
PAR	20.5	13	28.1	19	24.7	17	20.4	14	13.26	10	11.44	8	12.11	9
AP-PP	22.6	18	15.5	13	20.7	17	37.5	27	38.26	28	31.41	22	31.09	23
Others	2.7	-	4.6	-	2.2	-	2.4	-	2.88	-	1.10	-	-	-
Total	100	66	100	67	100	67	100	67	100	67	100	67	100	67

Sources: Las elecciones autonómicas en España, 1980-1997, p.61.
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